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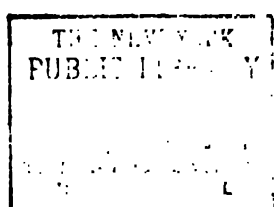
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HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE
BY
H. A. TAINE, D. C. L.

IMPERIAL EDITION.

Of this edition 500 copies have been printed,
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WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE

IMPERIAL EDITION

HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

H. A. TAINE, D. C. L.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

H. VAN LAUN

One of the Masters at the Edinburgh Academy

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CONTENTS.—VOL. IV.

PART II.

BOOK V.—MODERN AUTHORS.

CHAPTER III.

Criticism and History.—Macaulay.

	PAGE
I. The vocation and position of Macaulay in England .	227
II. His <i>Essays</i> —Agreeable character and utility of the style—Opinions—Philosophy. Wherein it is English and practical—His <i>Essay on Bacon</i> —The true object, according to him, of the sciences—Comparison of Bacon with the ancients . . .	228
III. His criticism—Moral prejudices—Comparison of criticism in France and England—Why he is religious—Connection of religion and Liberalism in England—Macaulay's Liberalism— <i>Essay on Church and State</i>	233
IV. His passion for political liberty—How he is the orator and historian of the Whig party— <i>Essays on the Revolution and the Stuarts</i>	238
V. His talent—Taste for demonstration—Taste for development—Oratorical character of his mind—Wherein he differs from classic orators—His estimation for particular facts, experiment on the senses, personal reminiscences—Importance of decisive phenomena in every branch of knowledge— <i>Essays on Warren Hastings and Clive</i> . . .	243
VI. English marks of his talent—Rudeness—Humour—Poetry	255

	PAGE
VII. His work—Harmony of his talent, opinion, and work—Universality, unity, interest of his history—Picture of the <i>Highlands</i> — <i>James II. in Ireland</i> — <i>The Act of Toleration</i> — <i>The Massacre of Glencoe</i> —Traces of amplification and rhetoric . . .	263
VIII. Comparison of Macaulay with French historians—Wherein he is classical—Wherein he is English—Intermediate position of his mind between the Latin and the Germanic mind. . . .	282

CHAPTER IV.

Philosophy and History.—Carlyle.

§ 1.—STYLE AND MIND.

ECCENTRIC AND IMPORTANT POSITION OF CARLYLE IN ENGLAND.

I. His strangenesses, obscurities, violence—Fancy and enthusiasm—Crudeness and buffooneries . . .	285
II. Humour—Wherein it consists—It is Germanic—Grotesque and tragic pictures—Dandies and Poor Slaves—The Pigs' Catechism—Extreme tension of his mind and nerves	291
III. Barriers which hold and direct him—Perception of the real and of the sublime	300
IV. His passion for exact and demonstrated fact—His search after extinguished feelings—Vehemence of his emotion and sympathy—Intensity of belief and vision— <i>Past and Present</i> — <i>Cromwell's Letters and Speeches</i> —Historical mysticism—Grandeur and sadness of his visions—How he represents the world after his own mind.	301
V. Every object is a group, and every employment of human thought is the reproduction of a group—Two principal modes of reproducing it, and two principal modes of mind—Classification—Intui-	

tion—Inconvenience of the second process—It is obscure, hazardous, destitute of proofs—It tends to affectation and exaggeration—Hardness and presumption which it provokes—Advantages of this kind of mind—Alone capable of reproducing the object—Most favourable to original invention —The use made of it by Carlyle	PAGE 307
---	-------------

§ 2.—VOCATION.

INTRODUCTION OF GERMAN IDEAS IN EUROPE AND ENGLAND—
GERMAN STUDIES OF CARLYLE.

I. Appearance of original forms of mind—How they act and result—Artistic genius of the Renaissance— Oratorical genius of the classic age—Philosophi- cal genius of the modern age—Probable analogy of the three ages	313
II. Wherein consists the modern and German form of mind—How the aptitude for universal ideas has renewed the science of language, mythology, æsthetics, history, exegesis, theology, and meta- physics—How the metaphysical bent has trans- formed poetry	314
III. Capital idea derived thence—Conception of essential and complementary parts—New conception of nature and man	316
IV. Inconvenience of this aptitude—Gratuitous hypo- thesis and vague abstraction—Transient discredit of German speculations	318
V. How each nation may re-forged them—Ancient ex- amples : Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—The Puritans and Jansenists in the seventeenth century—France in the eighteenth century—By what roads these ideas may enter France—Positivism—Criticism	319
VI. By what roads these ideas may enter England—Exact	

and positive mind—Impassioned and poetic in- spiration—Road followed by Carlyle . . .	PAGE 320
--	-------------

§ 3.—PHILOSOPHY, MORALITY, AND CRITICISM.

HIS METHOD IS MORAL, NOT SCIENTIFIC—WHEREIN HE RESEMBLES THE PURITANS—SARTOR RESARTUS.

I. Sensible things are but appearances—Divine and mysterious character of existence—His meta- physics	323
II. How we may form into one another, positive, poetic, spiritualistic, and mystical ideas—How in Carlyle German metaphysics are altered into English Puritanism	328
III. Moral character of this mysticism—Conception of duty—Conception of God	330
IV. Conception of Christianity—Genuine and conven- tional Christianity—Other religions—Limit and scope of doctrine	331
V. Criticism—What weight it gives to writers—What class of writers it exalts—What class of writers it depreciates—His æsthetics—His judgment of Voltaire	335
VI. Future of Criticism—Wherein it is contrary to the prejudices of the age and of its vocation—Taste has but a relative authority	338

§ 4.—CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

I. Supreme importance of great men—They are re- vealers—They must be venerated	340
II. Connection between this and the German conception —Wherein Carlyle is imitative—Wherein he is original—Scope of his conception	342
III. How genuine history is that of heroic sentiments— Genuine historians are artists and psychologists	343

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
IV. His history of Cromwell—Why it is only composed of texts connected by a commentary—Its novelty and worth—How we should consider Cromwell and the Puritans—Importance of Puritanism in modern civilisation—Carlyle admires it unreservedly	345
V. His history of the French Revolution—Severity of his judgment—Wherein he has sight of the truth, and wherein he is unjust	349
VI. His judgment of modern England—Against the taste for comfort and the lukewarmness of convictions—Gloomy forebodings for the future of modern democracy—Against the authority of votes—Monarchical theory	351
VII. Criticism of these theories—Dangers of enthusiasm—Comparison of Carlyle and Macaulay	355

CHAPTER V.

Philosophy.—Stuart Mill.

I. Philosophy in England—Organisation of positive science—Lack of general ideas	357
II. Why metaphysics are wanting—Authority of Religion	358
III. Indications and splendour of free thought—New exegesis—Stuart Mill—His works—His order of mind—To what school of philosophers he belongs—Value of higher speculation in human civilisation	360

§ 1.—EXPERIENCE.

I. Object of logic—Wherein it is distinguished from psychology and metaphysics	362
--	-----

	PAGE
II. What is a judgment?—What do we know of the external and inner worlds?—The whole object of science is to add or connect facts	364
III. The system based on this view of the nature of our knowledge	369
IV. Theory of definitions—Its importance—Refutation of the old theory—There are no definitions of things, but of names only	370
V. Theory of proof—Ordinary theory—Its refutation—What is the really fundamental part of a syllogism?	374
VI. Theory of axioms—Ordinary theory—Its refutation—Axioms are only truths of experience of a certain class	379
VII. Theory of induction—The cause of a fact is only its invariable antecedent—Experience alone proves the stability of the laws of nature—What is a law?—By what methods are laws discovered?—The methods of agreement, of differences, of residues, of concomitant variations	382
VIII. Examples and applications—Theory of dew	390
IX. Deduction—Its province and method	395
X. Comparison of the methods of induction and deduction—Ancient employment of the first—Modern use of the second—Sciences requiring the first—Sciences requiring the second—Positive character of Mill's work—His predecessors	397
XI. Limits of our knowledge—It is not certain that all events happen according to laws—Chance in nature	400

§ 2.—ABSTRACTION.

- I. Agreement of this philosophy with the English mind—Alliance of the positive and religious spirits—

CONTENTS.

xi

	PAGE
By what faculty we arrive at the knowledge of causation	405
I. There are no substances or forces, but only facts and laws—Abstraction—Its nature—Its part in science	407
II. Theory of definitions—They explain the abstract generating elements of things	410
V. Theory of proof—The basis of proof in syllogism is an abstract law	412
. Theory of axioms—Axioms are relations between abstract truths—They may be reduced to the axiom of identity	414
I. Theory of induction—Its methods are of elimination or abstraction	416
II. The two great operations of the mind, experience and abstraction—The two great manifestations of things, sensible facts and abstract laws—Why we ought to pass from the first to the second—Meaning and extent of the axiom of causation .	417
III. It is possible to arrive at the knowledge of first elements—Error of German metaphysicians—They have neglected the element of chance, and of local perturbations—What might be known by philosophising ant—Idea and limits of metaphysics—Its state in the three thinking nations	420
K. A morning in Oxford	424

CHAPTER VI.

Poetry.—Tennyson.

Talent and work—First attempts—Wherein he was opposed to preceding poets—Wherein he carried on their spirit	427
I. First period—Female characters—Delicacy and re-	

	PAGE
finement of sentiment and style—Variety of his emotions and of his subjects—Literary curiosity and poetic dilettantism— <i>The Dying Swan</i> — <i>The Lotus-Eaters</i>	428
III. Second period—Popularity, good fortune, and life—Permanent sensibility and virgin freshness of the poetic temperament—Wherein he is at one with nature— <i>Locksley Hall</i> —Change of subject and style—Violent outbreak and personal feeling— <i>Maud</i>	433
IV. Return of Tennyson to his first style— <i>In Memoriam</i> —Elegance, coldness, and lengthiness of this poem—The subject and the talent must harmonise—What subjects agree with the dilettante artist— <i>The Princess</i> —Comparison with <i>As You Like It</i> —Fanciful and picturesque world—How Tennyson repeats the dreams and the style of the Renaissance	439
V. How Tennyson repeats the ingenuousness and simplicity of the old epic— <i>The Idylls of the King</i> —Why he has restored the epic of the Round Table—Purity and elevation of his models and his poetry— <i>Elaine</i> — <i>Morte d'Arthur</i> —Want of individual and absorbing passion—Flexibility and disinterestedness of his mind—Talent for metamorphosis, embellishment, and refinement	447
VI. His public—Society in England—Country comfort—Elegance—Education—Habits—Wherein Tennyson suits such a society—Society in France—Parisian life—Its pleasures—Display—Conversation—Boldness of mind—Wherein Alfred de Musset suits such a society—Comparison of the two societies and of the two poets	454

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Volume IV.

Part II.

AM E. GLADSTONE,	Frontispiece.
SMITH,	Page 233
AM PITT, (EARL OF CHATHAM)	" 238
ND BURKE,	" 254
E PASCAL,	" 283
HUME,	" 346
AAC NEWTON,	" 399
D TENNYSON,	" 427



CHAPTER III.

Criticism and History.—Macaulay.

I.

I SHALL not here attempt to write the life of Lord Macaulay. It can only be related twenty years hence, when his friends shall have put together all their recollections of him. As to what is public now, it seems to me useless to recall it: every one knows that his father was an abolitionist and a philanthropist; that Macaulay passed through a most brilliant and complete classical education; that at twenty-five his essay on Milton made him famous; that at thirty he entered parliament, and took his standing there amongst the first orators; that he went to India to reform the law, and that on his return he was appointed to high offices; that on one occasion his liberal opinions in religious matters lost him his seat in parliament; that he was re-elected amidst universal congratulations; that he continued to be the most celebrated publicist and the most accomplished writer of the Whig party; and that on this ground, towards the close of his life, the gratitude of his party and the public admiration, made him a British peer. It will be a fine biography to write—a life of honour and happiness, devoted to noble ideas, and occupied by manly enterprises; literary in the first place, but sufficiently charged with action

and immersed in business to furnish substance and solidity to his eloquence and style, to form the observer side by side with the artist, and the thinker side by side with the writer. On the present occasion I will only describe the thinker and writer: I leave the life, I take his works; and first his *Essays*.

II.

His *Essays* are a collection of articles from reviews: I confess to a fondness for books of this kind. In the first place, we can throw down the volume after a score of pages, begin at the end, or in the middle; we are not its slave, but its master; we can treat it like a newspaper: in fact, it is the journal of a mind. In the second place, it is miscellaneous; in turning over a page, we pass from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, from England to India: this diversity surprises and pleases. Lastly, involuntarily, the author is indiscreet; he displays himself to us, keeping back nothing; it is a familiar conversation, and no conversation is worth so much as that of England's greatest historian. We are pleased to mark the origin of this generous and powerful mind, to discover what faculties have nourished his talent, what researches have shaped his knowledge, what opinions he formed on philosophy, religion, the state, literature; what he was, and what he has become; what he wishes, and what he believes.

Seated in an arm-chair, with our feet on the fender, we see little by little, as we turn over the leaves of the book, an animated and thoughtful face arise before us; the countenance assumes expression and clearness; the different features are mutually explained and lightened

up; presently the author lives again for us, and before us; we perceive the causes and birth of all his thoughts, we foresee what he is going to say; his bearing and mode of speech are as familiar to us as those of a man whom we see every day; his opinions correct and affect our own; he enters partly into our thoughts and our life; he is two hundred leagues away, and his book stamps his image on us, as the reflected light paints on the horizon the object from which it is emitted. Such is the charm of books, which deal with all kinds of subjects, which give the author's opinions on all sorts of things, which lead us in all directions of his thoughts, and make us, so to speak, walk around his mind.

Macaulay treats philosophy in the English fashion, as a practical man. He is a disciple of Bacon, and sets him above all philosophers; he decides that genuine science dates from him; that the speculations of old thinkers are only witticisms; that for two thousand years the human mind was on a wrong tack; that only since Bacon it has discovered the goal to which it must turn, and the method by which it must arrive there. This goal is utility. The object of knowledge is not theory, but application. The object of mathematicians is not the satisfaction of an idle curiosity, but the invention of machines calculated to alleviate human labour, to increase the power of subduing nature, to render life more secure, commodious, and happy. The object of astronomy is not to furnish matter for vast calculations and poetical cosmogonies, but to subserve geography and to guide navigation. The object of anatomy and the zoological sciences is not to suggest eloquent systems on the nature of organisation, or to set before the eyes the orders of the animal kingdom by

an ingenious classification, but to conduct the surgeon's hand and the physician's prognosis. The object of every research and every study is to diminish pain, to augment comfort, to ameliorate the condition of man; theoretical laws are serviceable only in their practical use; the labours of the laboratory and the cabinet receive their sanction and value only through the use made of them by workshops and mills; the tree of knowledge must be estimated only by its fruits. If we wish to judge of a philosophy, we must observe its effects; its works are not its books, but its acts. The philosophy of the ancients produced fine writings, sublime phrases, infinite disputes, hollow dreams, systems displaced by systems, and left the world as ignorant, as unhappy, and as wicked as it found it. That of Bacon produced observations, experiments, discoveries, machines, entire arts and industries:

“It has lengthened life; it has mitigated pain; it has extinguished diseases; it has increased the fertility of the soil; it has given new securities to the mariner; it has furnished new arms to the warrior; it has spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers; it has guided the thunderbolt innocuously from heaven to earth; it has lighted up the night with the splendour of the day; it has extended the range of the human vision; it has multiplied the power of the human muscles; it has accelerated motion; it has annihilated distance; it has facilitated intercourse, correspondence, all friendly offices, all despatch of business; it has enabled man to descend to the depths of the sea, to soar into the air, to penetrate securely into the noxious recesses of the earth, to traverse the land in cars which whirl along without horses, and the ocean in ships which run ten knots an hour against the wind.”¹

¹ Macaulay's Works, ed. Lady Trevelyan, 8 vols. 1866; *Essay on Bacon*, vi. 222.

The first was consumed in solving unsolvable enigmas, fabricating portraits of an imaginary sage, mounting from hypothesis to hypothesis, tumbling from absurdity to absurdity ; it despised what was practicable, promised what was impracticable ; and because it disregarded the limits of the human mind, ignored its power. The other, measuring our force and weakness, diverted us from roads that were closed to us, to start us on roads that were open to us ; it recognised facts and laws, because it resigned itself to remain ignorant of their essence and principles ; it rendered man more happy, because it has not pretended to render him perfect ; it discovered great truths and produced great effects, because it had the courage and good sense to study small things, and to keep for a long time to petty vulgar experiments ; it has become glorious and powerful, because it deigned to become humble and useful. Formerly, science furnished only vain pretensions and chimerical conceptions, whilst it held itself far aloof from practical existence, and styled itself the sovereign of man. Now, science possesses acquired truths, the hope of loftier discoveries, an ever-increasing authority, because it has entered upon active existence, and has declared itself the servant of man. Let it keep to its new functions ; let it not try to penetrate the region of the invisible ; let it renounce what must remain unknown ; it does not contain its own issue, it is but a medium ; man was not made for it, but science was made for man ; it is like the thermometers and piles which it constructs for its own experiments ; its whole glory, merit, and office, is to be an instrument :

“ We have sometimes thought than an amusing fiction might be written, in which a disciple of Epictetus and a disciple of

Bacon should be introduced as fellow-travellers. They come to a village where the small-pox has just begun to rage, and find houses shut up, intercourse suspended, the sick abandoned, mothers weeping in terror over their children. The Stoic assures the dismayed population that there is nothing bad in the small-pox, and that to a wise man disease, deformity, death, the loss of friends, are not evils. The Baconian takes out a lancet and begins to vaccinate. They find a body of miners in great dismay. An explosion of noisome vapours has just killed many of those who were at work; and the survivors are afraid to venture into the cavern. The Stoic assures them that such an accident is nothing but a mere ἀπορρηγνύμενον. The Baconian, who has no such fine word at his command, contents himself with devising a safety-lamp. They find a shipwrecked merchant wringing his hands on the shore. His vessel with an inestimable cargo has just gone down, and he is reduced in a moment from opulence to beggary. The Stoic exhorts him not to seek happiness in things which lie without himself, and repeats the whole chapter of Epictetus, πρὸς τοὺς τὴν ἀπορίαν δεικνύσας. The Baconian constructs a diving-bell, goes down in it, and returns with the most precious effects from the wreck. It would be easy to multiply illustrations of the difference between the philosophy of thorns and the philosophy of fruit, the philosophy of words and the philosophy of works."¹

It is not for me to discuss these opinions; it is for the reader to blame or praise them, if he sees fit: I do not wish to criticise doctrines, but to depict a man; and truly nothing could be more striking than this absolute scorn for speculation, and this absolute love for the practical. Such a mind is entirely suitable to the national genius: in England a barometer is still called a philosophical instrument; philosophy is there a thing unknown. The English have moralists,

¹ Macaulay's Works; *Essay on Bacon*, vi. 223.

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ADAM SMITH

psychologists, but no metaphysicians : if there is one—Hamilton, for instance—he is a sceptic in metaphysics ; he has only read the German philosophers to refute them ; he regards speculative philosophy as an extravagance of visionaries, and is compelled to apologize to his readers for the strangeness of his subject, when he tries to make them understand somewhat of Hegel's conceptions. The positive and practical English, excellent politicians, administrators, fighters, and workers, are no more suited than the ancient Romans for the abstractions of subtle dialectics and grand systems ; and Cicero, too, once excused himself, when he tried to expound to his audience of senators and public men, the deep and audacious deductions of the Stoics.

III.

The only part of philosophy which pleases men of this kind is morality, because like them it is wholly practical, and only attends to actions. Nothing else was studied at Rome, and every one knows what place it holds in English philosophy : Hutcheson, Price, Ferguson, Wollaston, Adam Smith, Bentham, Reid, and many others, have filled the last century with dissertations and discussions on the rule of duty, and the faculty which discovers our duty ; and Macaulay's *Essays* are a new example of this national and dominant inclination : his biographies are less portraits than judgments. What strictly is the degree of uprightness and dishonesty of the personage he describes, that is the important question for him ; he makes all other questions refer to it ; he applies himself throughout only to justify, excuse, accuse, or condemn. If he speaks of Lord Clive, Warren

Hastings, Sir William Temple, Addison, Milton, or any other man, he devotes himself first of all to measure exactly the number and greatness of their faults and virtues ; he interrupts himself, in the midst of a narration, to examine whether the action, which he is relating, is just or unjust ; he considers it as a legist and a moralist, according to positive and natural law ; he takes into account the state of public opinion, the examples which surrounded the accused, the principles he professed, the education he has received ; he bases his opinion on analogies drawn from ordinary life, from the history of all peoples, the laws of all countries ; he brings forward so many proofs, such certain facts, such conclusive reasonings, that the best advocate might find a model in him ; and when at last he pronounces judgment, we think we are listening to the summing up of a judge. If he analyses a literature—that of the Restoration, for instance—he empanels before the reader a sort of jury to judge it. He makes it appear at the bar, and reads the indictment ; he then presents the plea of the defenders, who try to excuse its levities and indecencies : at last he begins to speak in his turn, and proves that the arguments set forth are not applicable to the case in question ; that the accused writers have laboured effectually and with premeditation, to corrupt morals ; that they not only employed unbecoming words, but that they designedly, and with deliberate intent, represented unbecoming things ; that they always took care to conceal the hatefulness of vice, to render virtue ridiculous, to make adultery fashionable and a necessary exploit of a man of taste ; that this intention was all the more manifest from its being in the spirit of the times, and that they were pandering to a

crime of their age. If I dare employ, like Macaulay, religious comparisons, I should say that his criticism was like the Last Judgment, in which the diversity of talents, characters, ranks, employments, will disappear before the consideration of virtue and vice, and where there will be no more artists, but a judge of the righteous and the wicked.

In France, criticism has a freer gait; it is less subservient to morality, and more akin to art. When we try to relate a life, or paint the character of a man, we more readily consider him as a simple subject of painting or science: we only think of displaying the various feelings of his heart, the connection of his ideas and the necessity of his actions; we do not judge him, we only wish to represent him to the eyes, and make him intelligible to the reason. We are spectators, and nothing more. What matters it if Peter or Paul is a rascal? that is the business of his contemporaries: they suffered from his vices, and ought to think only of despising and condemning him. Now we are beyond his reach, and hatred has disappeared with danger. At this distance, and in the historic perspective, I see in him but a mental machine, provided with certain springs, animated by a primary impulse, affected by various circumstances. I calculate the play of his motives; I feel with him the impact of obstacles; I see beforehand the curve which his motion will trace out; I feel for him neither aversion nor disgust; I have left these feelings on the threshold of history, and I taste the very deep and pure pleasure of seeing a soul act after a definite law, in a fixed groove, with all the variety of human passions, with the succession and

constraint, which the inner structure of man imposes on the external development of his passions.

In a country where men are so much occupied by morality, and so little by philosophy, there is much religion. For lack of natural theology they have a positive theology, and demand from the Bible the metaphysics not supplied by reason. Macaulay is a Protestant; and though a very candid and liberal man, he at times retains the English prejudices against the Roman-Catholic religion.¹ Popery in England always passes for an impious idolatry and for a degrading servitude. After two revolutions, Protestantism, allied to liberty, seemed to be the religion of liberty; and Roman-Catholicism, allied to despotism, seemed the religion of despotism: the two doctrines have both assumed the name of the cause which they supported. To the first has been transferred the love and veneration which were felt for the rights which it defended; on the second has been poured the scorn and hatred which were felt for the slavery which it would have introduced: political passions have inflamed religious beliefs; Protestantism has been confounded with the victorious fatherland, Roman-Catholicism, with the conquered enemy; prejudices survive when the strife is ended, and to this day English Protestants do not feel for the

¹ "Charles himself, and his creature Land, while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices,—a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance."—Macaulay, v. 24; *Milton*.

"It is difficult to relate without a pitying smile, that in the sacrifice of the mass, Loyola saw transubstantiation take place, and that, as he stood praying on the steps of the Church of St. Dominic, he saw the Trinity in Unity, and wept aloud with joy and wonder."—Macaulay, vi. 468; *Ranke, History of the Popes*.

doctrines of Roman-Catholics the same good-will or impartiality which French Roman-Catholics feel for the doctrines of Protestants.

But these English opinions are moderated in Macaulay by an ardent love for justice. He is a liberal in the largest and best sense of the word. He demands that all citizens should be equal before the law, that men of all sects should be declared capable to fill all public functions—that Roman-Catholics and Jews may, as well as Lutherans, Anglicans, and Calvinists, sit in Parliament. He refutes Mr. Gladstone and the partisans of State religion with incomparable ardour and eloquence, abundance of proof, and force of argument; he clearly proves that the State is only a secular association, that its end is wholly temporal, that its single object is to protect the life, liberty, and property of the citizens; that in entrusting to it the defence of spiritual interests, we overturn the order of things; and that to attribute to it a religious belief, is as though a man, walking with his feet, should also confide to his feet the care of seeing and hearing. This question has often been discussed in France; it is so to this day; but no one has brought to it more common sense, more practical reasoning, more palpable arguments. Macaulay withdraws the discussion from the region of metaphysics; he leads it back to the earth; he brings it home to all minds; he takes his proofs and examples from the best known facts of ordinary life; he addresses the shopkeeper, the citizen, the artist, the scholar, every one; he connects the truth, which he asserts, with the familiar and intimate truths which no one can help admitting, and which are believed with all the force of experience and habit; he carries off and conquers our belief by such solid reasons,

that his adversaries will thank him for convincing them ; and if by chance a few amongst us have need of a lesson on tolerance, they had better look for it in Macaulay's Essay on that subject.

IV.

This love of justice becomes a passion when political liberty is at stake ; this is the sensitive point ; and when we touch it, we touch the writer to the quick. Macaulay loves it interestedly, because it is the only guarantee of the properties, happiness, and life of individuals ; he loves it from pride, because it is the honour of man : he loves it from patriotism, because it is a legacy left by preceding generations ; because for two hundred years a succession of upright and great men have defended it against all attacks, and preserved it in all dangers ; because it has made the power and glory of England ; because in teaching the citizens to will and to decide for themselves, it adds to their dignity and intelligence ; because in assuring internal peace and continuous progress, it guarantees the land against bloody revolutions and silent decay. All these advantages are perpetually present to his eyes ; and whoever attacks the liberty, which forms their foundation, becomes at once his enemy. Macaulay cannot look calmly on the oppression of man ; every outrage on human will hurts him like a personal outrage. At every step bitter words escape him, and the stale adulation of courtiers, which he meets with, brings to his lips a sarcasm the more violent from being the more deserved. Pitt, he says, at college wrote Latin verses on the death of George I. In this piece "the Muses are earnestly entreated to weep over the urn of Cæsar :

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for Cæsar, says the poet, loved the muses ; Cæsar, who could not read a line of Pope, and who loved nothing but punch and fat women.”¹ Elsewhere, in the biography of Miss Burney, he relates how the poor young lady, having become celebrated by her two first novels, received as a reward, and as a great favour, a place of keeper of the robes of Queen Charlotte ; how, worn out with watching, sick, nearly dying, she asked as a favour the permission to depart ; how “the sweet queen” was indignant at this impertinence, unable to understand that anyone could refuse to die in and for her service, or that a woman of letters should prefer health, life, and glory to the honour of folding her Majesty’s dresses. But it is when Macaulay comes to the history of the Revolution that he hauls to justice and vengeance those men who violated the rights of the public, who hated and betrayed the national cause, who outraged liberty. He does not speak as a historian, but as a contemporary ; it seems as though his life and his honour were at stake, that he pleaded for himself, that he was a member of the Long Parliament, that he heard at the door the muskets and swords of the guards sent to arrest Pym and Hampden. M. Guizot has related the same history ; but we recognise in his book the calm judgment and impartial emotion of a philosopher. He does not condemn the actions of Strafford or Charles ; he explains them ; he shows in Strafford the imperious character, the domineering genius which feels itself born to command and to crush opposition, whom an invincible bent rouses against the law or the right which restrains him, who oppresses from a sort of inner craving, and who is made to govern as a sword is to strike.

¹ Macaulay, vi. 39 ; *An Essay on William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

He shows in Charles the innate respect for royalty, the belief in divine right, the rooted conviction that every remonstrance or demand is an insult to his crown, an outrage on his rights, an impious and criminal sedition. Thenceforth we see in the strife of king and parliament but the strife of two doctrines; we cease to take an interest in one or the other, to take an interest in both; we are spectators of a drama; we are no longer judges at a trial. But it is a trial which Macaulay conducts before us; he takes a side in it; his account is the address of a public prosecutor before the court, the most entrancing, the most acrimonious, the best reasoned, that was ever written. He approves of the condemnation of Strafford; he honours and admires Cromwell; he exalts the character of the Puritans; he praises Hampden to such a degree, that he calls him the equal of Washington; he has no words scornful and insulting enough for Laud; and what is more terrible, each of his judgments is justified by as many quotations, authorities, historic precedents, arguments, conclusive proofs, as the vast erudition of Hallam or the calm dialectics of Mackintosh could have assembled. Judge of this transport of passion and this withering logic by a single passage:

“For more than ten years the people had seen the rights which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious King who had recognised them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another parliament: another chance was given to our fathers: were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le Roi le veut*? Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second Petition of Right at the foot of the throne,

to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

"The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

"We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

"For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man, but a bad king. We can as easily

conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations; and if in that relation we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel."¹

This is for the father; now the son will receive something. The reader will perceive, by the furious invective, what excessive rancour the government of the Stuarts left in the heart of a patriot, a Whig, a Protestant, and an Englishman :

"Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch; and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations."²

This piece, with all the biblical metaphors, which has

¹ Macaulay, v. 27; *Milton*.

² *Ibid.* v. 35; *Milton*.

preserved something of the tone of Milton and the Puritan prophets, shows to what an issue the various tendencies of this great mind were turning—what was its bent—how the practical spirit, science and historic talent, the unvaried presence of moral and religious ideas, love of country and justice, concurred to make of Macaulay the historian of liberty.

V.

In this his talent assisted him ; for his opinions are akin to his talent.

What first strikes us in him is the extreme solidity of his mind. He proves all that he says, with astonishing vigour and authority. We are almost certain never to go astray in following him. If he cites a witness, he begins by measuring the veracity and intelligence of the authors quoted, and by correcting the errors they may have committed, through negligence or partiality. If he pronounces a judgment, he relies on the most certain facts, the clearest principles, the simplest and most logical deductions. If he develops an argument, he never loses himself in a digression ; he always has his goal before his eyes ; he advances towards it by the surest and straightest road. If he rises to general considerations he mounts step by step through all the grades of generalisation, without omitting one ; he feels his way every instant ; he neither adds nor subtracts from facts ; he desires at the cost of every precaution and research, to arrive at the precise truth. He knows an infinity of details of every kind ; he owns a great number of philosophic ideas of every species ; but his erudition is as well tempered as his philosophy, and

both constitute a coin worthy of circulation amongst all thinking minds. We feel that he believes nothing without reason; that if we doubted one of the facts which he advances, or one of the views which he propounds, we should at once encounter a multitude of authentic documents and a serried phalanx of convincing arguments. In France and Germany we are too much accustomed to receive hypotheses for historic laws, and doubtful anecdotes for attested events. We too often see whole systems established, from day to day, according to the caprice of a writer; a sort of castles in the air, whose regular arrangement simulates the appearance of genuine edifices, and which vanish at a breath, when we come to touch them. We have all made theories, in a fireside discussion, in case of need, when for lack of argument we required some fictitious reasoning, like those Chinese generals who, to terrify their enemies, placed amongst their troops formidable monsters of painted cardboard. We have judged men at random, under the impression of the moment, on a detached action, an isolated document; and we have dressed them up with vices or virtues, folly or genius, without controlling by logic or criticism the hazardous decisions to which our precipitation had carried us. Thus we feel a deep satisfaction and a sort of internal peace, on leaving so many doctrines of ephemeral bloom in our books or reviews, to follow the steady gait of a guide so clear-sighted, reflective, instructed, able to lead us aright. We understand why the English accuse the French of being frivolous, and the Germans of being chimerical. Macaulay brings to the moral sciences that spirit of circumspection, that desire for certainty, and that instinct of truth, which make up the practical mind, and

which from the time of Bacon have constituted the scientific merit and power of his nation. If art and beauty loose by this, truth and certainty are gained; and no one, for instance, would blame our author for inserting the following demonstration in the life of Addison :

“He (Pope) asked Addison’s advice. Addison said that the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.

“Now there can be no doubt that Pope’s plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with great skill and success. But does it necessarily follow that Addison’s advice was bad? And if Addison’s advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk his all in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counselled him ill; and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison’s advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except the instance of the *Rape of the Lock*. Tasso recast his *Jerusalem*, Akenside recast his *Pleasures of the Imagination* and his *Epistle to Curio*. Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodelled the *Rape of the Lock*, made the same experiment on the *Dunciad*. All these attempts failed.

Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done ?

"Addison's advice was good. But had it been bad, why should we pronounce it dishonest ? Scott tells us that one of his best friends predicted the failure of *Waverley*. Herder adjured Goethe not to take so unpromising a subject as *Faust*. Hume tried to dissuade Robertson from writing the *History of Charles the Fifth*. Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that Cato would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goethe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs." ¹

What does the reader think of this dilemma, and this double series of inductions ? The demonstrations would not be more studied or rigorous, if a physical law were in question.

This demonstrative talent was increased by his talent for development. Macaulay enlightens inattentive minds, as well as he convinces opposing minds ; he manifests, as well as he persuades, and spreads as much evidence over obscure questions as certitude over doubtful points. It is impossible not to understand him ; he approaches the subject under every aspect, he turns it over on every side ; it seems as though he addressed himself to every spectator, and studied to make himself understood by every individual ; he calculates the scope of every mind, and seeks for each a fit mode of exposition ; he takes us all by the hand, and leads us alternately to the end, which he has marked out beforehand. He sets out from the simplest facts, he descends

¹ Macaulay, vii. 109 ; *Life and Writings of Addison*.

to our level, he brings himself even with our mind ; he spares us the pain of the slightest effort ; then he leads us on, and smoothes the road throughout ; we rise gradually without perceiving the slope, and at the end we find ourselves at the top, after having walked as easily as on the plain. When a subject is obscure, he is not content with a first explanation ; he gives a second, then a third : he sheds light in abundance from all sides, he searches for it in all regions of history ; and the wonderful thing is, that he is never prolix. In reading him we find ourselves in our proper sphere ; we feel as though we could understand ; we are annoyed to have taken twilight so long for day ; we rejoice to see this abounding light rising and leaping forth in torrents ; the exact style, the antithesis of ideas, the harmonious construction, the artfully balanced paragraphs, the vigorous summaries, the regular sequence of thoughts, the frequent comparisons, the fine arrangement of the whole—not an idea or phrase of his writings in which the talent and the desire to explain, the characteristic of an orator, does not shine forth. Macaulay was a member of Parliament, and spoke so well, we are told, that he was listened to for the mere pleasure of listening. The habit of public speaking is perhaps the cause of this incomparable lucidity. To convince a great assembly, we must address all the members ; to rivet the attention of absent-minded and weary men, we must save them from all fatigue ; they must take in too much in order to take in enough. Public speaking vulgarises ideas ; it drags truth from the height at which it dwells, with some thinkers, to bring it amongst the crowd ; it reduces it to the level of ordinary minds, who, without this intervention, would only have seen it

from afar, and high above them. Thus, when great orators consent to write, they are the most powerful of writers; they make philosophy popular; they lift all minds a stage higher, and seem to enlarge human intelligence. In the hands of Cicero, the dogmas of the Stoics and the dialectics of the Academicians lose their prickles. The subtle Greek arguments become united and easy; the hard problems of providence, immortality, highest good, become public property. Senators, men of business, lawyers, lovers of formulas and procedure, the massive and narrow intelligence of publicists, comprehend the deductions of Chrysippus; and the book *De Officiis* has made the morality of Panætius popular. In our days, M. Thiers, in his two great histories, has placed within reach of everybody the most involved questions of strategy and finance; if he would write a course of political economy for street-porters, I am sure he would be understood; and pupils of the lower classes at school have been able to read M. Guizot's *History of Civilisation*.

When, with the faculty for proof and explanation, a man feels the desire of proving, he arrives at vehemence. These serried and multiplied arguments which all tend to a single aim, those reiterated logical points, returning every instant, one upon the other, to shake the opponent, give heat and passion to the style. Rarely was eloquence more captivating than Macaulay's. He has the oratorical afflatus; all his phrases have a tone; we feel that he would govern minds, that he is irritated by resistance, that he fights as he discusses. In his books the discussion always seizes and carries away the reader; it advances evenly, with accumulating force, straightforward, like those great American rivers, impetu-

ous as a torrent and wide as a sea. This abundance of thought and style, this multitude of explanations, ideas, and facts, this vast aggregate of historical knowledge goes rolling on, urged forward by internal passion, sweeping away objections in its course, and adding to the dash of eloquence the irresistible force of its mass and weight. We might say that the history of James II. is a discourse in two volumes, spoken without stopping, and with never-failing voice. We see the oppression and discontent begin, increase, widen, the partisans of James abandoning him one by one, the idea of revolution arise in all hearts, confirmed, fixed, the preparations made, the event approaching, growing imminent, then suddenly falling on the blind and unjust monarch, and sweeping away his throne and dynasty, with the violence of a foreseen and fatal tempest. True eloquence is that which thus perfects argument by emotion, which reproduces the unity of events by the unity of passion, which repeats the motion and the chain of facts by the motion and the chain of ideas. It is a genuine imitation of nature; more complete than pure analysis; it reanimates beings; its dash and vehemence form part of science and of truth. Of whatever subject Macaulay treats, political economy, morality, philosophy, literature, history, he is impassioned for his subject. The current which bears away events, excites in him, as soon as he sees it, a current which bears forward his thought. He does not set forth his opinion; he pleads it. He has that energetic, sustained, and vibrating tone which bows down opposition and conquers belief. His thought is an active force; it is imposed on the hearer; it attacks him with such superiority, falls upon him with such a train of proofs, such

a manifest and legitimate authority, such a powerful impulse, that we never think of resisting it; and it masters the heart by its vehemence, whilst at the same time it masters the reason by its evidence.

All these gifts are common to orators; they are found in different proportions and degrees, in men like Cicero and Livy, Bourdaloue and Bossuet, Fox and Burke. These fine and solid minds form a natural family, and all have for their chief feature the habit and talent of passing from particular to general ideas, orderly and successively, as we climb a ladder by setting our feet one after the other on every round. The inconvenience of this art is the use of common-place. They who practise it do not depict objects with precision; they fall easily into vague rhetoric. They hold in their hands ready-made developments, a sort of portable scales, equally applicable on both sides of the same and every question. They continue willingly in a middle region, amongst the tirades and arguments of the special pleader, with an indifferent knowledge of the human heart, and a fair number of amplifications on that which is useful and just. In France and at Rome, amongst the Latin races, especially in the seventeenth century, these men love to hover above the earth, amidst grand words or general considerations, in the style of the drawing-room and the academy. They do not descend to minor facts, convincing details, circumstantial examples of every-day life. They are more inclined to plead than to prove. In this Macaulay is distinguished from them. His principle is, that a special fact has more hold on the mind than a general reflection. He knows that, to give men a clear and vivid idea, they must be brought back

to their personal experience. He remarks¹ that, in order to make them realise a storm, the only method is to recall to them some storm which they have themselves seen and heard, with which their memory is still charged, and which still re-echoes through all their senses. He practises in his style the philosophy of Bacon and Locke. With him, as well as with them, the origin of every idea is a sensation. Every complicated argument, every entire conception, has certain particular facts for its only support. It is so for every structure of ideas, as well as for a scientific theory. Beneath long calculations, algebraical formulas, subtle deductions, written volumes which contain the combinations and elaborations of learned minds, there are two or three sensible experiences, two or three little facts on which we may lay our finger, a turn of the wheel in a machine, a scalpel-cut in a living body, an unlooked-for colour in a liquid. These are decisive specimens. The whole substance of theory, the whole force of proof, is contained in this. Truth is here, as a nut in its shell: painful and ingenious discussion adds nothing thereto; it only extracts the nut. Thus, if we would rightly prove, we must before everything present these specimens, insist upon them, make them visible and tangible to the reader, as far as may be done in words. This is difficult, for words are not things. The only resource of the writer is to employ words which bring things before the eyes. For this he must appeal to the reader's personal observation, set out from his experience, compare the unknown objects presented to him with the known objects which he sees every day, place

¹ See in his *Essay on the Life and Writings of Addison* (vii. 78) Macaulay's observations on the *Campaign*.

past events beside contemporary events. Macaulay always has before his mind English imaginations, full of English images, I mean full of the detailed and present recollections of a London Street, a dram-shop, a wretched alley, an afternoon in Hyde Park, a moist green landscape, a white ivy-covered country-house, a clergyman in a white tie, a sailor in a sou'-wester. He has recourse to such recollections; he makes them still more precise by descriptions and statistics; he notes colours and qualities; he has a passion for exactness; his descriptions are worthy both of a painter and a topographer; he writes like a man who sees a physical and sensible object, and who at the same time classifies and weighs it. We will see him carry his figures even to moral or literary worth, assign to an action, a virtue, a book, a talent, its compartment and its step in the scale, with such clearness and relief, that we could easily imagine ourselves in a classified museum, not of stuffed skins, but of feeling, suffering, living animals.

Consider, for instance, these phrases, by which he tries to render visible to an English public, events in India:

“During that interval the business of a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible, that he might return home before his constitution had suffered from the heat, to marry a peer's daughter, to buy rotten boroughs in Cornwall, and to give balls in St. James's Square.¹ . . . There was still a nabob of Bengal, who stood to the English rulers of his country in the same relation in which Augustulus stood to Odoacer, or the last Merovingians to Charles Martel and Pepin. He lived at Moorshedabad, surrounded by princely magnificence. He was

¹ Macaulay, vi. 549; *Warren Hastings*.

approached with outward marks of reverence, and his name was used in public instruments. But in the government of the country he had less real share than the youngest writer or cadet in the Company's service."¹

Of Nuncomar, the native servant of the Company, he writes ;

"Of his moral character it is difficult to give a notion to those who are acquainted with human nature only as it appears in our island. What the Italian is to the Englishman, what the Hindoo is to the Italian, what the Bengalee is to other Hindoos, that was Nuncomar to other Bengalees. The physical organization of the Bengalee is feeble even to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness, for purposes of manly resistance ; but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt. All those arts which are the natural defence of the weak are more familiar to this subtle race than to the Ionian of the time of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the dark ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengalee. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the Lower Ganges. All those millions do not furnish one sepoy to the armies of the Company. But as usurers, as money-changers, as sharp legal practitioners, no class of human beings can bear a comparison with them."²

¹ Macaulay, vi. 553 ; *Warren Hastings*.

² *Ibid.* 555.

It was such men and such affairs, which were to provide Burke with the amplest and most brilliant subject-matter for his eloquence ; and when Macaulay described the distinctive talent of the great orator, he described his own :

“ He (Burke) had, in the highest degree, that noble faculty whereby man is able to live in the past and in the future, in the distant and in the unreal. India and its inhabitants were not to him, as to most Englishmen, mere names and abstractions, but a real country and a real people. The burning sun, the strange vegetation of the palm and the cocoa-tree, the rice-field, the tank, the huge trees, older than the Mogul empire, under which the village crowds assemble ; the thatched roof of the peasant's hut ; the rich tracery of the mosque where the imaum prays with his face to Mecca, the drums, and banners, and gaudy idola, the devotee swinging in the air, the graceful maiden, with the pitcher on her head, descending the steps to the river-side, the black faces, the long beards, the yellow streaks of sect, the turbans and the flowing robes, the spears and the silver maces, the elephants with their canopies of state, the gorgeous palanquin of the prince, and the close litter of the noble lady, all those things were to him as the objects amidst which his own life had been passed, as the objects which lay on the road between Beaconsfield and St. James's Street. All India was present to the eye of his mind, from the halls where suitors laid gold and perfumes at the feet of sovereigns, to the wild moor where the gipsy camp was pitched, from the bazaar, humming like a bee-hive with the crowd of buyers and sellers, to the jungle where the lonely courier shakes his bunch of iron rings to scare away the hyenas. He had just as lively an idea of the insurrection at Benares as of Lord George Gordon's riots, and of the execution of Nuncomar as of the execution of Dr. Dodd. Oppression in Bengal was to him the same thing as oppression in the streets of London.”¹

¹ Macaulay, vi. 619 ; *Warren Hastings*.

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VI.

Other forms of his talent are more peculiarly English. Macaulay has a rough touch; when he strikes, he knocks down. Béranger sings:

“Chez nous, point,
Point de ces coups de poing
Qui font tant d'honneur à l'Angleterre.”¹

And a French reader would be astonished if he heard a great historian treat an illustrious poet in this style:

“But in all those works in which Mr. Southey has completely abandoned narration, and has undertaken to argue moral and political questions, his failure has been complete and ignominious. On such occasions his writings are rescued from utter contempt and derision solely by the beauty and purity of the English. We find, we confess, so great a charm in Mr. Southey's style that, even when he writes nonsense, we generally read it with pleasure, except indeed when he tries to be droll. A more insufferable jester never existed. He very often attempts to be humorous, and yet we do not remember a single occasion on which he has succeeded further than to be quaintly and flippantly dull. In one of his works he tells us that Bishop Spratt was very properly so called, inasmuch as he was a very small poet. And in the book now before us he cannot quote Francis Bugg, the renegade Quaker, without a remark on his unsavoury name. A wise man might talk folly like this by his own fireside; but that any human being, after having made such a joke should write it down, and copy it out, and transmit it to the printer, and correct the proof-sheets, and send it forth into the world, is enough to make us ashamed of our species.”²

¹ Béranger, *Chansons*, 2 vols. 1853; *Les Boceurs, ou L'Anglomane*.

² Macaulay, v. 333; *Southey's Colloquies on Society*.

We may imagine that Macaulay does not treat the dead better than the living. Thus he speaks of Archbishop Laud :

“The severest punishment which the two Houses could have inflicted on him would have been to set him at liberty and send him to Oxford. There he might have staid, tortured by his own diabolical temper, hungering for Puritans to pillory and mangle, plaguing the Cavaliers, for want of somebody else to plague, with his peevishness and absurdity, performing grimaces and antics in the cathedral, continuing that incomparable diary, which we never see without forgetting the vices of his heart in the imbecility of his intellect, minuting down his dreams, counting the drops of blood which fell from his nose, watching the direction of the salt, and listening for the note of the screech-owls. Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance which it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot.”¹

While he jests he remains grave, as do almost all the writers of his country. Humour consists in saying extremely comical things in a solemn tone, and in preserving a lofty style and ample phraseology, at the very moment when the author is making all his hearers laugh. Such is the beginning of an article on a new historian of Burleigh :

“The work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdingnag, and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface ; the prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book : and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary

¹ Macaulay, v. 204 ; *Hallam's Constitutional History*.

library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us better than by saying that it consists of about two thousand closely printed quarto pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the deluge, have been considered as light reading by Hilpah and Shalum. But unhappily the life of man is now threescore years and ten ; and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Dr. Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence."¹

This comparison, borrowed from Swift, is a mockery in Swift's taste. Mathematics become in English hands an excellent means of railery ; and we remember how the Dean, comparing Roman and English generosity by numbers, overwhelmed Marlborough by a sum in addition. Humour employs against the people it attacks, positive facts, commercial arguments, odd contrasts drawn from ordinary life. This surprises and perplexes the reader, without warning ; he falls abruptly into some familiar and grotesque detail ; the shock is violent ; he bursts out laughing without being much amused ; the trigger is pulled so suddenly and so roughly, that it is like a knockdown blow. For instance, Macaulay is refuting those who would not print the indecent classical authors :

"We find it difficult to believe that, in a world so full of temptations as this, any gentleman whose life would have been virtuous if he had not read Aristophanes and Juvenal will be made vicious by reading them. A man who, exposed to all the influences of such a state of society as that in which we live, is yet afraid of exposing himself to the influence of a few Greek or Latin verses, acts, we think, much like the felon who begged

¹ Macaulay, v. 587 ; *Burleigh and his Times*.

the sheriff to let him have an umbrella held over his head from the door of Newgate to the gallows, because it was a drizzling morning, and he was apt to take cold."¹

Irony, sarcasm, the bitterest kinds of pleasantry, are the rule with Englishmen. They tear when they scratch. To be convinced of this, we should compare French scandal, as Molière represents it in the *Misanthrope*, with English scandal as Sheridan represents it, imitating Molière and the *Misanthrope*. Célimène pricks, but does not wound; Lady Sneerwell's friends wound, and leave bloody marks on all the reputations which they handle. The raillery, which I am about to give, is one of Macaulay's tenderest:

"They (the ministers) therefore gave the command to Lord Galway, an experienced veteran, a man who was in war what Molière's doctors were in medicine, who thought it much more honourable to fail according to rule, than to succeed by innovation, and who would have been very much ashamed of himself if he had taken Monjuich by means so strange as those which Peterborough employed. This great commander conducted the campaign of 1707 in the most scientific manner. On the plain of Almanza he encountered the army of the Bourbons. He drew up his troops according to the methods prescribed by the best writers, and in a few hours lost eighteen thousand men, a hundred and twenty-standards, all his baggage and all his artillery."²

These incivilities are all the stronger, because the ordinary tone is noble and serious.

Hitherto we have seen only the reasoner, the scholar, the orator, and the wit: there is still in Macaulay a poet; and if we had not read his *Lays of Ancient Rome*,

¹ Macaulay, vi. 491; *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*.

² *Ibid.* v. 672; Lord Mahon's *War of the Succession in Spain*.

it would suffice to read a few of his periods, in which the imagination, long held in check by the severity of the proof, breaks out suddenly in splendid metaphors, and expands into magnificent comparisons, worthy by their amplitude of being introduced into an epic :

“Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her ! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory !”¹

These noble words come from the heart ; the fount is full, and though it flows, it never becomes dry. As soon as the writer speaks of a cause which he loves, as soon as he sees Liberty rise before him, with Humanity and Justice, Poetry bursts forth spontaneously from his soul, and sets her crown on the brows of her noble sisters :

“The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been

¹ Macaulay, v. 31 ; *Milton*.

replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devastated, and, after having turned a beautiful and fruitful garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet. In some directions, the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages, the more we observe the signs of our own times, the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up by a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.”¹

I ought, perhaps, in concluding this analysis, to point out the imperfections caused by these high qualities; how ease, charm, a vein of amiability, variety, simplicity, playfulness, are wanting in this manly eloquence, this solid reasoning, and this glowing dialectic; why the art of writing and classical purity are not always found in this partisan, fighting from his platform; in short, why an Englishman is not a Frenchman or an Athenian. I prefer to transcribe another passage, the solemnity and magnificence of which will give some idea of the grave and rich ornament, which Macaulay throws over his narrative, a sort of potent vegetation, flowers of brilliant purple, like those which are spread over every page of *Paradise Lost* and *Childe Harold*. Warren Hastings had returned from India, and had just been placed on his trial:

¹ Macaulay, v. 595; *Burleigh and his Times*.

“On the thirteenth of February 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interests which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilisation were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

“The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great Hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give

advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way, George Elliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the

voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.”¹

This evocation of the national history, glory, and constitution forms a picture of a unique kind. The species of patriotism and poetry which it reveals is an abstract of Macaulay’s talent; and the talent, like the picture, is thoroughly English.

VII.

Thus prepared, he entered upon the History of England; and he chose therefrom the period best suited to his political opinions, his style, his passion, his knowledge, the national taste, the sympathy of Europe. He related the establishment of the English constitution, and concentrated all the rest of history about this unique event, “the finest in the world,” to the mind of an Englishman and a politician. He brought to this work a new method of great beauty, extreme power; its success has been extraordinary. When the second volume appeared, 30,000 copies were ordered beforehand. Let us try to describe this history, to connect it with that method, and that method to that order of mind.

¹ Macaulay, vi. 628; *Warren Hastings*.

The history is universal and not broken. It comprehends events of every kind, and treats of them simultaneously. Some have related the history of races, others of classes, others of governments, others of sentiments, ideas, and manners; Macaulay has related all.

"I should very imperfectly execute the task which I have undertaken if I were merely to treat of battles and sieges, of the rise and fall of administrations, of intrigues in the palace, and of debates in the parliament. It will be my endeavour to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government, to trace the progress of useful and ornamental arts, to describe the rise of religious sects and the changes of literary taste, to portray the manners of successive generations, and not to pass by with neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements. I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors."¹

He kept his word. He has omitted nothing, and passed nothing by. His portraits are mingled with his narrative. We find those of Danby, Nottingham, Shrewsbury, Howe, during the account of a session, between two parliamentary divisions. Short curious anecdotes, domestic details, the description of furniture, intersect, without disjointing, the record of a war. Quitting the narrative of important business, we gladly look upon the Dutch tastes of William, the Chinese museum, the grottos, the mazes, aviaries, ponds, geometrical garden-beds, with which he defaced Hampton

¹ Macaulay. i. 2; *History of England before the Restoration*, ch. i.

Court. A political dissertation precedes or follows the relation of a battle ; at other times the author is a tourist or a psychologist before becoming a politician or a tactician. He describes the highlands of Scotland, semi-papistical and semi-pagan, the seers wrapped in bulls' hides to await the moment of inspiration, Christians making libations of milk or beer to the demons of the place ; pregnant women, girls of eighteen, working a wretched patch of oats, whilst their husbands or fathers, athletic men, basked in the sun ; robbery and barbarities looked upon as honourable deeds ; men stabbed from behind or burnt alive ; repulsive food, coarse oats, and cakes made of the blood of a live cow, offered to guests as a mark of favour and politeness ; infected hovels where men lay on the bare ground, and where they woke up half smothered, half blinded by the smoke, and half mad with the itch. The next instant he stops to mark a change in the public taste, the horror then experienced on account of these brigands' retreats, this country of wild rocks and barren moors ; the admiration now felt for this land of heroic warriors, this country of grand mountains, seething waterfalls, picturesque defiles. He finds in the progress of physical welfare the causes of this moral revolution, and concludes that, if we praise mountains and an uncivilised life, it is because we are satiated with security. He is successively an economist, a literary man, a publicist, an artist, a historian, a biographer, a story-teller, even a philosopher ; by this diversity of parts he imitates the diversity of human life, and presents to the eyes, heart, mind, all the faculties of man, the complete history of the civilisation of his country.

Others, like Hume, have tried or are trying to do it.

They set forth now religious matters, a little further political events, then literary details, finally general considerations on the change of society and government, believing that a collection of histories is history, and that parts joined endwise are a body. Macaulay did not believe it and he did well. Though English, he had the spirit of harmony. So many accumulated events form with him not a total, but a whole. Explanations, accounts, dissertations, anecdotes, illustrations, comparisons, allusions to modern events, everything is connected in his book. It is because everything is connected in his mind. He had a most lively consciousness of causes; and causes unite facts. By them, scattered events are assembled into a single event; they unite them because they produce them, and the historian, who seeks them all out, cannot fail to perceive or to feel the unity which is their effect. Read, for instance, the voyage of James II. to Ireland: no picture is more curious. Is it, however, nothing more than a curious picture? When the king arrived at Cork, there were no horses to be found. The country is a desert. No more industry, cultivation, civilisation, since the English and Protestant colonists were driven out, robbed, and slain. James was received between two hedges of half-naked Rapparees, armed with skeans, stakes, and half-pikes under his horse's feet they spread by way of carpet the rough frieze mantles, such as the brigands and shepherds wore. He was offered garlands of cabbage stalks for crowns of laurel. In a large district he only found two carts. The palace of the lord-lieutenant in Dublin was so ill built, that the rain drenched the rooms. The king left for Ulster; the French officers thought they were travelling "through the deserts of Arabia." The

Count d'Avaux wrote to the French court, that, to get one truss of hay they had to send five or six miles. At Charlemont, with great difficulty, as a matter of favour, they obtained a bag of oatmeal for the French legation. The superior officers lay in dens which they would have thought too foul for their dogs. The Irish soldiers were half-savage marauders, who could only shout, cut throats, and disband. Ill fed on potatoes and sour milk, they cast themselves like starved men on the great flocks belonging to the Protestants. They greedily tore the flesh of oxen and sheep, and swallowed it half raw and half rotten. For lack of kettles, they cooked it in the skin. When Lent began, the plunderers generally ceased to devour, but continued to destroy. A peasant would kill a cow merely in order to get a pair of brogues. At times a band slaughtered fifty or sixty beasts, took the skins, and left the bodies to poison the air. The French ambassador reckoned that in six weeks, there had been slain 50,000 horned cattle, which were rotting on the ground. They counted the number of the sheep and lambs slain at 400,000. Cannot the result of the rebellion be seen beforehand? What could be expected of these gluttonous serfs, so stupid and savage? What could be drawn from a devastated land, peopled with robbers? To what kind of discipline could these marauders and butchers be subjected? What resistance will they make on the Boyne, when they see William's old regiments, the furious squadrons of French refugees, the enraged and insulted Protestants of Londonderry and Enniskillen, leap into the river and run with uplifted swords against their muskets? They will flee, the king at their head; and the minute anecdotes scattered

amidst the account of receptions, voyages, and ceremonies, will have announced the victory of the Protestants. The history of manners is thus seen to be involved in the history of events; the one is the cause of the other, and the description explains the narrative.

It is not enough to see some causes; we must see a great many of them. Every event has a multitude. Is it enough for me, if I wish to understand the action of Marlborough or of James, to be reminded of a disposition or a quality which explains it? No; for, since it has for a cause a whole situation and a whole character, I must see at one glance and in abstract the whole character and situation which produced it. Genius concentrates. It is measured by the number of recollections and ideas which it assembles in one point. That which Macaulay has assembled is enormous. I know no historian who has a surer, better furnished, better regulated memory. When he is relating the actions of a man or a party, he sees in an instant all the events of his history, and all the maxims of his conduct; he has all the details present; he remembers them every moment, and a great many of them. He has forgotten nothing; he runs through them as easily, as completely, as surely, as on the day when he enumerated or wrote them. No one has so well taught or known history. He is as much steeped in it as his personages. The ardent Whig or Tory, experienced, trained to business, who rose and shook the House, had not more numerous, better arranged, more precise arguments. He did not better know the strength and weakness of his cause; he was not more familiar with the intrigues, rancours, variation of parties, the chances of the strife, individual and public interests. The great novelists

penetrate the soul of their characters, assume their feelings, ideas, language; it seems as if Balzac had been a commercial traveller, a female door-keeper, a courtesan, an old maid, a poet, and that he had spent his life in being each of these personages: his existence is multiplied, and his name is legion. With a different talent, Macaulay has the same power: an incomparable advocate, he pleads an infinite number of causes; and he is master of each cause, as fully as his client. He has answers for all objections, explanations for all obscurities, reasons for all tribunals. He is ready at every moment, and on all parts of his case. It seems as if he had been Whig, Tory, Puritan, Member of the Privy Council, Ambassador. He is not a poet like Michelet; he is not a philosopher like Guizot; but he possesses so well all the oratorical powers, he accumulates and arranges so many facts, he holds them so closely in his hand, he manages them with so much ease and vigour, that he succeeds in recomposing the whole and harmonious woof of history, not losing or separating one thread. The poet reanimates the dead; the philosopher formulates creative laws; the orator knows, expounds, and pleads causes. The poet resuscitates souls, the philosopher composes a system, the orator redispenses chains of arguments; but all three march towards the same end by different routes, and the orator, as well as his rivals, and by other means than his rivals, reproduces in his work the unity and complexity of life.

A second feature of this history is clearness. It is popular; no one explains better, or so much, as Macaulay. It seems as if he were making a wager with his reader, and said to him: Be as absent in mind,

as stupid, as ignorant as you please; in vain you will be absent in mind, you shall listen to me; in vain you will be stupid, you shall understand; in vain you will be ignorant, you shall learn. I will repeat the same idea in so many different forms, I will make it sensible by such familiar and precise examples, I will announce it so clearly at the beginning, I will resume it so carefully at the end, I will mark the divisions so well, follow the order of ideas so exactly, I will display so great a desire to enlighten and convince you, that you cannot help being enlightened and convinced. He certainly thought thus, when he was preparing the following passage on the law which, for the first time, granted to Dissenters the liberty of exercising their worship :

“Of all the Acts that have ever been passed by Parliament, the Toleration Act is perhaps that which most strikingly illustrates the peculiar vices and the peculiar excellences of English legislation. The science of Politics bears in one respect a close analogy to the science of Mechanics. The mathematician can easily demonstrate that a certain power, applied by means of a certain lever or of a certain system of pulleys, will suffice to raise a certain weight. But his demonstration proceeds on the supposition that the machinery is such as no load will bend or break. If the engineer, who has to lift a great mass of real granite by the instrumentality of real timber and real hemp, should absolutely rely on the propositions which he finds in treatises on Dynamics, and should make no allowance for the imperfection of his materials, his whole apparatus of beams, wheels, and ropes would soon come down in ruin, and, with all his geometrical skill, he would be found a far inferior builder to those painted barbarians who, though they never heard of the parallelogram of forces, managed to pile up Stonehenge. What the engineer is to the mathematician, the active states-

man is to the contemplative statesman. It is indeed most important that legislators and administrators should be versed in the philosophy of government, as it is most important that the architect who has to fix an obelisk on its pedestal, or to hang a tubular bridge over an estuary, should be versed in the philosophy of equilibrium and motion. But, as he who has actually to build must bear in mind many things never noticed by D'Alembert and Euler, so must he who has actually to govern be perpetually guided by considerations to which no allusion can be found in the writings of Adam Smith or Jeremy Bentham. The perfect lawgiver is a just temper between the mere man of theory, who can see nothing but general principles, and the mere man of business, who can see nothing but particular circumstances. Of lawgivers in whom the speculative element has prevailed to the exclusion of the practical, the world has during the last eighty years been singularly fruitful. To their wisdom Europe and America have owed scores of abortive constitutions, scores of constitutions which have lived just long enough to make a miserable noise, and have then gone off in convulsions. But in English legislation the practical element has always predominated, and not seldom unduly predominated, over the speculative. To think nothing of symmetry and much of convenience; never to remove an anomaly merely because it is an anomaly; never to innovate except when some grievance is felt; never to innovate except so far as to get rid of the grievance; never to lay down any proposition of wider extent than the particular case for which it is necessary to provide; these are the rules which have, from the age of John to the age of Victoria, generally guided the deliberations of our two hundred and fifty Parliaments."¹

Is the idea still obscure or doubtful? Does it still need proofs, illustrations? Do we wish for anything

¹ Macaulay, ii. 463, *History of England*, ch. xi.

more? You answer No; Macaulay answers Yes. After the general explanation comes the particular; after the theory, the application; after the theoretical demonstration, the practical. We would fain stop; but he proceeds:

“The Toleration Act approaches very near to the idea of a great English law. To a jurist, versed in the theory of legislation, but not intimately acquainted with the temper of the sects and parties into which the nation was divided at the time of the Revolution, that Act would seem to be a mere chaos of absurdities and contradictions. It will not bear to be tried by sound general principles. Nay, it will not bear to be tried by any principle, sound or unsound. The sound principle undoubtedly is, that mere theological error ought not to be punished by the civil magistrate. This principle the Toleration Act not only does not recognise, but positively disclaims. Not a single one of the cruel laws enacted against nonconformists by the Tudors or the Stuarts is repealed. Persecution continues to be the general rule. Toleration is the exception. Nor is this all. The freedom which is given to conscience is given in the most capricious manner. A Quaker, by making a declaration of faith in general terms, obtains the full benefit of the Act without signing one of the thirty-nine Articles. An Independent minister, who is perfectly willing to make the declaration required from the Quaker, but who has doubts about six or seven of the Articles, remains still subject to the penal laws. Howe is liable to punishment if he preaches before he has solemnly declared his assent to the Anglican doctrine touching the Eucharist. Penn, who altogether rejects the Eucharist, is at perfect liberty to preach without making any declaration whatever on the subject.

“These are some of the obvious faults which must strike every person who examines the Toleration Act by that standard of just reason which is the same in all countries and in all ages.

But these very faults may perhaps appear to be merits, when we take into consideration the passions and prejudices of those for whom the Toleration Act was framed. This law, abounding with contradictions which every smatterer in political philosophy can detect, did what a law framed by the utmost skill of the greatest masters of political philosophy might have failed to do. That the provisions which have been recapitulated are cumbrous, puerile, inconsistent with each other, inconsistent with the true theory of religious liberty, must be acknowledged. All that can be said in their defence is this ; that they removed a vast mass of evil without shocking a vast mass of prejudice ; that they put an end, at once and for ever, without one division in either House of Parliament, without one riot in the streets, with scarcely one audible murmur even from the classes most deeply tainted with bigotry, to a persecution which had raged during four generations, which had broken innumerable hearts, which had made innumerable firesides desolate, which had filled the prisons with men of whom the world was not worthy, which had driven thousands of those honest, diligent and god-fearing yeoman and artisans, who are the true strength of a nation, to seek a refuge beyond the ocean among the wigwams of red Indians and the lairs of panthers. Such a defence, however weak it may appear to some shallow speculators, will probably be thought complete by statesmen." ¹

What I find complete in this, is the art of developing. This antithesis of ideas, sustained by the antithesis of words, the symmetrical periods, the expressions designedly repeated to attract attention, the exhaustion of proof, set before our eyes the special-pleader's and oratorical talent, which we just before encountered in the art of pleading all causes, of employing an infinite number of methods, of mastering them all and always, during every incident of the

¹ Macaulay, ii. 465, *History of England*, ch. xi.

lawsuit. The final manifestation of a mind of this sort are the faults into which its talent draws it. By dint of development, he protracts. More than once his explanations are commonplace. He proves what all allow. He makes clear what is already clear. In one of his works there is a passage on the necessity of reactions which reads like the verbosity of a clever schoolboy. Other passages, excellent and novel, can only be read with pleasure once. On the second reading they appear too true; we have seen it all at a glance, and are wearied. I have omitted one-third of the passage on the Act of Toleration, and acute minds will think that I ought to have omitted another third.

The last feature, the most singular, the least English of this History, is, that it is interesting. Macaulay wrote, in the *Edinburgh Review*, several volumes of Essays; and everyone knows that the first merit of a reviewer or a journalist is to make himself readable. A thick volume naturally bores us; it is not thick for nothing; its bulk demands at the outset the attention of him who opens it. The solid binding, the table of contents, the preface, the substantial chapters, drawn up like soldiers in battle-array, all bid us take an arm-chair, put on a dressing-gown, place our feet on the fender, and study; we owe no less to the grave man who presents himself to us, armed with 600 pages of text and three years of reflection. But a newspaper which we glance at in a club, a review which we finger in a drawing-room in the evening, before sitting down to dinner, must needs attract the eyes, overcome absence of mind, conquer readers. Macaulay attained, through practice, this gift of readableness, and he retains in his History the habits which he acquired in peri-

odicals. He employs every means of keeping up attention, good or indifferent, worthy or unworthy of his great talents; amongst others, allusion to actual circumstances. You may have heard the saying of an editor, to whom Pierre Leroux offered an article on God. "God! there is no actuality about it!" Macaulay profits by this remark. He never forgets the actual. If he mentions a regiment, he points out in a few lines the splendid deeds which it has done since its formation up to our own day: thus the officers of this regiment, encamped in the Crimea, stationed at Malta, or at Calcutta, are obliged to read his History. He relates the reception of Schomberg in the House: who is interested in Schomberg? Forthwith he adds that Wellington, a hundred years later, was received, under like circumstances, with a ceremony copied from the first: what Englishman is not interested in Wellington? He relates the siege of Londonderry, he points out the spot which the ancient bastions occupy in the present town, the field which was covered by the Irish camp, the well at which the besiegers drank: what citizen of Londonderry can help buying his book? Whatever town he comes upon, he notes the changes which it has undergone, the new streets added, the buildings repaired or constructed, the increase of commerce, the introduction of new industries: hence all the aldermen and merchants are constrained to subscribe to his work. Elsewhere we find an anecdote of an actor and actress: as the superlative degree is interesting, he begins by saying that William Mountford was the most agreeable comedian, that Anne Bracegirdle was the most popular actress of the time. If he introduces a statesman, he always announces him by some great word: he was the

most insinuating, or the most equitable, or the best informed, or the most inveterately debauched, of all the politicians of the day. But Macaulay's great qualities serve him as well in this matter as his literary machinery, a little too manifest, a little too copious, a little too coarse. The astonishing number of details, the medley of psychological and moral dissertations, descriptions, relations, opinions, pleadings, portraits, beyond all, good composition and the continuous stream of eloquence, seize and retain the attention to the end. We have hard work to finish a volume of Lingard or Robertson; we should have hard work not to finish a volume of Macaulay.

Here is a detached narrative which shows very well, and in the abstract, the means of interesting which he employs, and the great interest which he excites. The subject is the Massacre of Glencoe. Macaulay begins by describing the spot like a traveller who has seen it, and points it out to the bands of tourists and dilettanti, historians and antiquarians, who every year start from London :

“Mac Ian dwelt in the mouth of a ravine situated not far from the southern shore of Loch Leven, an arm of the sea which deeply indents the western coast of Scotland, and separates Argyleshire from Inverness-shire. Near his house were two or three small hamlets inhabited by his tribe. The whole population which he governed was not supposed to exceed two hundred souls. In the neighbourhood of the little cluster of villages was some copsewood and some pasture land: but a little further up the defile no sign of population or of fruitfulness was to be seen. In the Gaelic tongue, Glencoe signifies the Glen of Weeping: and, in truth, that pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all the Scottish passes, the very

Valley of the Shadow of Death. Mists and storms brood over it through the greater part of the finest summer ; and even on those rare days when the sun is bright, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the impression made by the landscape is sad and awful. The path lies along a stream which issues from the most sullen and gloomy of mountain pools. Huge precipices of naked stone frown on both sides. Even in July the streaks of snow may often be discerned in the rifts near the summits. All down the sides of the crags heaps of ruin mark the headlong paths of the torrents. Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, or for one human form wrapped in a plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog or the bleat of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten pinnacle of rock. The progress of civilisation, which has turned so many wastes into fields yellow with harvests or gay with apple blossoms has only made Glencoe more desolate. All the science and industry of a peaceful age can extract nothing valuable from that wilderness : but, in an age of violence and rapine, the wilderness itself was valued on account of the shelter which it afforded to the plunderer and his plunder."¹

The description, though very beautiful, is written for effect. The final antithesis explains it ; the author has made it in order to show that the Macdonalds were the greatest brigands of the country.

The Master of Stair, who represented William III. in Scotland, relying on the fact that Mac Ian had not taken the oath of allegiance on the appointed day, determined to destroy the chief and his clan. He was not urged by hereditary hate nor by private interest ; he was a man of taste, polished and amiable. He did this crime out of humanity, persuaded that there was

¹ Macaulay, iii. 513, *History of England*, ch. xviii.

no other way of pacifying the Highlands. Thereupon Macaulay inserts a dissertation of four pages, very well written, full of interest and knowledge, whose diversity affords us rest, which leads us over all kinds of historical examples, and moral lessons :

"We daily see men do for their party, for their sect, for their country, for their favourite schemes of political and social reform, what they would not do to enrich or to avenge themselves. At a temptation directly addressed to our private cupidity or to our private animosity, whatever virtue we have takes the alarm. But virtue itself may contribute to the fall of him who imagines that it is in his power, by violating some general rule of morality, to confer an important benefit on a church, on a commonwealth, on mankind. He silences the remonstrances of conscience, and hardens his heart against the most touching spectacles of misery, by repeating to himself that his intentions are pure, that his objects are noble, that he is doing a little evil for the sake of a great good. By degrees he comes altogether to forget the turpitude of the means in the excellence of the end, and at length perpetrates without one internal twinge acts which would shock a buccaneer. There is no reason to believe that Dominic would, for the best archbishopric in Christendom, have incited ferocious marauders to plunder and slaughter a peaceful and industrious population, that Everard Digby would, for a dukedom, have blown a large assembly of people into the air, or that Robespierre would have murdered for hire one of the thousands whom he murdered from philanthropy."¹

Do we not recognise here the Englishman brought up on psychological and moral essays and sermons, who involuntarily and every instant spreads over the paper? This species of literature is common in

¹ Macaulay, iii. 313.

French lecture-rooms and reviews; this is why it is unknown in French histories. When we wish to enter English history, we have only to step down from the pulpit and the newspaper.

I do not transcribe the sequel of the explanation, the examples of James V., Sixtus V., and so many others, whom Macaulay cites to find precedents for the Master of Stair. Then follows a very circumstantial and very solid discussion, to prove that William III. was not responsible for the massacre. It is clear that Macaulay's object, here as elsewhere, is less to draw a picture than to suggest a judgment. He desires that we should have an opinion on the morality of the act, that we should attribute it to its real authors, that each should bear exactly his own share, and no more. A little further, when the question of the punishment of the crime arises, and William, having severely chastised the executioners, contents himself with recalling the Master of Stair, Macaulay writes a dissertation of several pages to consider this injustice and to blame the king. Here, as elsewhere, he is still an orator and a moralist; nothing has more power to interest an English reader. Happily for us, he at length becomes once more a narrator; the petty details which he then selects fix the attention, and place the scene before our eyes :

"The sight of the red coats approaching caused some anxiety among the population of the valley. John, the eldest son of the Chief, came, accompanied by twenty clansmen, to meet the strangers, and asked what this visit meant. Lieutenant Lindsay answered that the soldiers came as friends, and wanted nothing but quarters. They were kindly received, and were lodged under the thatched roofs of the little community. Glenlyon and several of his men were taken into the house of a

tacksman who was named from the cluster of cabins over which he exercised authority, Inverriggen. Lindsay was accommodated nearer to the abode of the old chief. Auchintriater, one of the principal men of the clan, who governed the small hamlet of Auchnaion, found room there for a party commanded by a serjeant named Barbour. Provisions were liberally supplied. There was no want of beef, which had probably fattened in distant pastures: nor was any payment demanded: for in hospitality, as in thievery, the Gaelic marauders rivalled the Bedouins. During twelve days the soldiers lived familiarly with the people of the glen. Old Mac Ian, who had before felt many misgivings as to the relation in which he stood to the government seems to have been pleased with the visit. The officers passed much of their time with him and his family. The long evenings were cheerfully spent by the peat fire with the help of some packs of cards which had found their way to that remote corner of the world, and of some French brandy which was probably part of James' farewell gift to his highland supporters. Glenlyon appeared to be warmly attached to his niece and her husband Alexander. Every day he came to their house to take his morning draught. Meanwhile he observed with minute attention all the avenues by which, when the signal for the slaughter should be given, the Macdonalds might attempt to escape to the hills; and he reported the result of his observations to Hamilton. . . .

"The night was rough. Hamilton and his troops made slow progress, and were long after their time. While they were contending with the wind and snow, Glenlyon was supping and playing at cards with those whom he meant to butcher before daybreak. He and Lieutenant Lindsay had engaged themselves to dine with the old Chief on the morrow.

"Late in the evening a vague suspicion that some evil was intended crossed the mind of the Chief's eldest son. The soldiers were evidently in a restless state; and some of them uttered strange exclamations. Two men, it is said, were over-

heard whispering. 'I do not like this job,' one of them muttered; 'I should be glad to fight the Macdonalds. But to kill men in their beds—' 'We must do as we are bid,' answered another voice. 'If there is anything wrong, our officers must answer for it.' John Macdonald was so uneasy, that, soon after midnight, he went to Glenlyon's quarters. Glenlyon and his men were all up, and seemed to be getting their arms ready for action. John, much alarmed, asked what these preparations meant. Glenlyon was profuse of friendly assurances. 'Some of Glengarry's people have been harrying the country. We are getting ready to march against them. You are quite safe. Do you think that, if you were in any danger, I should not have given a hint to your brother Sandy and his wife?' John's suspicions were quieted. He returned to his house, and lay down to rest."¹

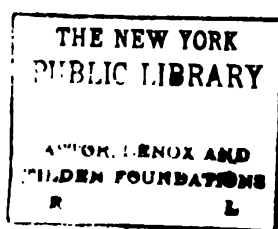
On the next day, at five in the morning, the old chieftain was assassinated, his men shot in their beds or by the fireside. Women were butchered; a boy, twelve years old, who begged his life on his knees, was slain; they who fled half-naked, women and children, died of cold and hunger in the snow.

These precise details, these soldiers' conversations, this picture of evenings by the fireside, give to history the animation and life of a novel. And still the historian remains an orator: for he has chosen all these facts to exhibit the perfidy of the assassins and the horrible nature of the massacre; and he will make use of them later on, to demand, with all the power and passion of logic, the punishment of the criminals.

¹ Macaulay, iii. 526; *History of England*, ch. xviii.

VIII.

Thus this History, whose qualities seem so little English, bears throughout the mark of genuine English talent. Universal, connected, it embraces all the facts in its vast, undivided, and unbroken woof. Developed, abundant, it enlightens obscure facts, and opens up to the most ignorant the most complicated questions. Interesting, varied, it attracts and preserves the attention. It has life, clearness, unity, qualities which appear to be wholly French. It seems as if the author were a populariser like Thiers, a philosopher like Guizot, an artist like Thierry. The truth is, that he is an orator, and that after the fashion of his country; but, as he possesses in the highest degree the oratorical faculties, and possesses them with a national tendency and instincts, he seems to supplement through them the faculties which he has not. He is not genuinely philosophical: the mediocrity of his earlier chapters on the ancient history of England proves this sufficiently; but his force of reasoning, his habits of classification and order, bestow unity upon his History. He is not a genuine artist; when he draws a picture, he is always thinking of proving something; he inserts dissertations in the most interesting and affecting places; he has neither charm, lightness, vivacity, nor *finesse*, but a marvellous memory, vast knowledge, an ardent political passion, a great legal talent for expounding and pleading every cause, a precise knowledge of precise and petty facts which rivet the attention, charm, diversify, animate, and warm a narrative. He is not simply a populariser; he is too ardent, too eager to prove, to conquer belief, to beat down his foes, to have





BLAISE PASCAL

only the limpid talent of a man who explains and expounds, with no other end than to explain and expound, which spreads light throughout, and never spreads heat; but he is so well provided with details and reasons, so anxious to convince, so rich in his expositions, that he cannot fail to be popular. By this breadth of knowledge, this power of reasoning and passion, he has produced one of the finest books of the age, whilst manifesting the genius of his nation. This solidity, this energy, this deep political passion, these moral prepossessions, these oratorical habits, this limited philosophical power, this somewhat uniform style, without flexibility or sweetness, this eternal gravity, this geometrical progress to a settled end, announce in him the English mind. But if he is English to the French, he is not so to his nation. The animation, interest, clearness, unity of his narrative, astonish them. They think him brilliant, rapid, bold; it is, they say, a French mind. Doubtless he is so in many respects: if he understands Racine badly, he admires Pascal and Bossuet; his friends say that he used daily to read Madame de Sévigné. Nay more, by the structure of his mind, by his eloquence and rhetoric, he is Latin; so that the inner structure of his talent places him amongst the classics: it is only by his lively appreciation of special, complex, and sensible facts, by his energy and fierceness, by the rather heavy richness of his imagination, by the depth of his colouring, that he belongs to his race. Like Addison and Burke, he resembles a strange graft, fed and transformed by the sap of the national stock. At all events, this judgment is the strongest mark of the difference between the two

nations. To reach the English intellect, a Frenchman must make two voyages. When he has crossed the first interval, which is wide, he comes upon Macaulay. Let him re-embark; he must accomplish a second passage, just as long, to arrive at Carlyle for instance, —a mind fundamentally Germanic, on the genuine English soil.

CHAPTER IV.

Philosophy and History.—Carlyle.

WHEN we ask Englishmen, especially those under forty, who amongst them are the great thinkers, they first mention Carlyle; but at the same time they advise us not to read him, warning us that we will not understand him at all. Then, of course, we hasten to get the twenty volumes of Carlyle—criticism, history, pamphlets, fantasies, philosophy; we read them with very strange emotions, contradicting every morning our opinion of the night before. We discover at last that we are in presence of a strange animal, a relic of a lost family, a sort of mastodon, who has strayed in a world, not made for him. We rejoice in this zoological good luck, and dissect him with minute curiosity, telling ourselves that we shall probably never find another like him.

§ 1.—STYLE AND MIND.

We are at first put out. All is new here—ideas, style, tone, the shape of the phrases, and the very vocabulary. He takes everything in a contrary meaning, does violence to everything, to expressions as well as to things. With him paradoxes are set down for principles; common sense takes the form of absurdity. We are, as it were, carried into an unknown world, whose

inhabitants walk head downwards, feet in the air, dressed in motley, as great lords and maniacs, with contortions, jerks, and cries; we are grievously stunned by these extravagant and discordant sounds; we want to stop our ears, we have a headache, we are obliged to decipher a new language. We see upon the table volumes which ought to be as clear as possible—*The History of the French Revolution*, for instance; and there we read these headings to the chapters: “Realised Ideals—Viaticum—Astræa Redux—Petition in Hieroglyphs—Windbags—Mercury de Brézé—Broglie the War-God.” We ask ourselves what connection there can be between these riddles and such simple events as we all know. We then perceive that Carlyle always speaks in riddles. “Logic-choppers” is the name he gives to the analysts of the eighteenth century; “Beaver science” is his word for the catalogues and classifications of our modern men of science; “Transcendental moonshine” signifies the philosophical and sentimental dreams imported from Germany. The religion of the “rotatory calabash” means external and mechanical religion.¹ He cannot be contented with a simple expression; he employs figures at every step; he embodies all his ideas; he must touch forms. We see that he is besieged and haunted by brilliant or gloomy visions; every thought with him is a shock; a stream of misty passion comes bubbling into his overflowing brain, and the torrent of images breaks forth and rolls on amidst every kind of mud and magnificence. He cannot reason, he must paint. If he wants to explain the embarrassment

¹ Because the Kalmucks put written prayers into a calabash turned by the wind, which in their opinion produces a perpetual adoration. In the same way are the prayer-mills of Thibet used.

of a young man obliged to choose a career amongst the lusts and doubts of the age, in which we live, he tells you of

"A world all rocking and plunging, like that old Roman one when the measure of its iniquities was full ; the abyasses, and subterranean and supernal deluges, plainly broken loose ; in the wild dim-lighted chaos all stars of Heaven gone out. No star of Heaven visible, hardly now to any man ; the pestiferous fogs and foul exhalations grown continual, have, except on the highest mountain-tops, blotted out all stars : will-o'-wisp, of various course and colour, take the place of stars. Over the wild surging chaos, in the leaden air, are only sudden glares of revolutionary lightning ; then mere darkness, with philanthropic phosphorescences, empty meteoric lights ; here and there an ecclesiastical luminary still hovering, hanging on to its old quaking fixtures, pretending still to be a Moon or Sun,—though visibly it is but a Chinese Lantern made of *paper* mainly, with candle-end foully dying in the heart of it."¹

Imagine a volume, twenty volumes, made up of such pictures, united by exclamations and apostrophes ; even history—that of the *French Revolution*—is like a delirium. Carlyle is a Puritan seer, before whose eyes pass scaffolds, orgies, massacres, battles, and who, beset by furious or bloody phantoms, prophesies, encourages, or curses. If we do not throw down the book from anger or weariness, we will become dazed ; our ideas leave us, nightmare seizes us, a medley of grinning and ferocious figures whirl about in our head ; we hear the howls of insurrection, cries of war ; we are sick ; we are like those hearers of the Covenanters, whom the preaching filled with disgust or enthusiasm,

¹ *The Life of John Sterling*, ch. v. ; *A Profession*.

and who broke the head of their prophet, if they did not take him for their leader.

These violent outbursts will seem to us still more violent if we mark the breadth of the field which they traverse. From the sublime to the ignoble, from the pathetic to the grotesque, is but a step with Carlyle. At one and the same time he touches the two extremes. His adorations end in sarcasms. The Universe is for him an oracle and a temple, as well as a kitchen and a stable. He moves freely about, and is at his ease in mysticism, as well as in brutality. Speaking of the setting sun at the North Cape, he writes :

“ Silence as of death ; for Midnight, even in the Arctic latitudes, has its character : nothing but the granite cliffs ruddy-tinged, the peaceable gurgle of that slow-heaving Polar Ocean, over which in the utmost North the great Sun hangs low and lazy, as if he too were slumbering. Yet is his cloud-couch wrought of crimson and cloth-of-gold ; yet does his light stream over the mirror of waters, like a tremulous fire-pillar, shooting downwards to the abyss, and hide itself under my feet. In such moments, Solitude also is invaluable ; for who would speak, or be looked on, when behind him lies all Europe and Africa, fast asleep, except the watchmen ; and before him the silent Immensity, and Palace of the Eternal, whereof our Sun is but a porch-lamp ! ” ¹

Such splendours he sees whenever he is face to face with nature. No one has contemplated with a more powerful emotion the silent stars which roll eternally in the pale firmament and envelop our little world. No one has contemplated with more of religious awe the infinite obscurity in which our slender thought appears for an instant like a gleam, and by our side the gloomy

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, 1868, bk. II. ch. viii. ; *Centre of Indifference*.

abyss in which the hot frenzy of life is to be extinguished. His eyes are habitually fixed on this vast Darkness, and he paints with a shudder of veneration and hope the effort which religions have made to pierce it :

“ In the heart of the remotest mountains rises the little Kirk ; the Dead all slumbering round it, under their white memorial stones, ‘ in hope of a happy resurrection ; ’—dull wert thou, O Reader, if never in any hour (say of moaning midnight, when such Kirk hung spectral in the sky, and Being was as if swallowed up of Darkness) it spoke to thee—things unspeakable, that went to thy soul’s soul. Strong was he that had a Church, what we can call a Church : he stood thereby, though ‘ in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities,’ yet manlike towards God and man : the vague shoreless Universe had become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he knew.”¹

Rembrandt alone has beheld these sombre visions drowned in shade, traversed by mystic rays : look, for example, at the church which he has painted ; glance at the mysterious floating apparition, full of radiant forms, which he has set in the summit of the heavens, above the stormy night and the terror which shakes mortality.² The two imaginations have the same painful grandeur, the same scintillations, the same agony, and both sink with like facility into triviality and crudeness. No ulcer, no filth, is repulsive enough to disgust Carlyle. On occasion he will compare the politician who seeks popularity to “ the dog that was drowned last summer, and that floats up and down the Thames with ebb and flood. . . . You get to know him by sight. . . with a painful oppression of nose

¹ *History of the French Revolution*, bk. i. ch. ii. ; *Realised Ideals*.

² In the *Adoration of the Magi*.

. . . Daily you may see him, . . . and daily the odour of him is getting more intolerable."¹ Absurdities, incongruities, abound in his style. When the frivolous Cardinal de Loménie proposed to convoke a Plenary Court, he compares him to "trained canary birds, that would fly cheerfully with lighted matches and fire cannon; fire whole powder magazines."² At need, he turns to funny images. He ends a dithyramb with a caricature: he bespatters magnificence with eccentric and coarse language: he couples poetry with puns:

"The Genius of England no longer soars Sunward, world defiant, like an Eagle through the storms, 'mewing her mighty youth,' as John Milton saw her do: the Genius of England, much liker a greedy Ostrich intent on provender and a whole skin mainly, stands with its *other* extremity Sunward; with its Ostrich-head stuck into the readiest bush, of old Church-tippets, King-cloaks, or what other 'sheltering Fallacy' there may be, and *so* awaits the issue. The issue has been slow; but it is now seen to have been inevitable. No Ostrich, intent on gross terrene provender, and sticking its head into Fallacies, but will be awakened one day,—in a terrible *à-posteriori* manner if not otherwise!"³

With such buffoonery he concludes his best book, never quitting his tone of gravity and gloom, in the midst of anathemas and prophecies. He needs these great shocks. He cannot remain quiet, or stick to one literary province at a time. He leaps in unimpeded jerks from one end of the field of ideas to the other; he confounds all styles, jumbles all forms, heaps together pagan allusions, Bible

¹ *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, 1850; *Stump Orator*, 35.

² *The French Revolution*, i. bk. iii. ch. vii.; *Interneccine*.

³ *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, iii. x.; the end.

reminiscences, German abstractions, technical terms, poetry, slang, mathematics, physiology, archaic words, neologies. There is nothing he does not tread down and ravage. The symmetrical constructions of human art and thought, dispersed and upset, are piled under his hands into a vast mass of shapeless ruins, from the top of which he gesticulates and fights, like a conquering savage.

II.

This kind of mind produces humour, a word untranslatable in French, because in France they have not the idea. Humour is a species of talent which amuses Germans, Northmen; it suits their mind, as beer and brandy suit their palate. For men of another race it is disagreeable; they often find it too harsh and bitter. Amongst other things, this talent embraces a taste for contrasts. Swift jokes with the serious mien of an ecclesiastic, performing religious rites, and develops the most grotesque absurdities, like a convinced man. Hamlet, shaken with terror and despair, bristles with buffooneries. Heine mocks his own emotions, even whilst he displays them. These men love travesties, put a solemn garb over comic ideas, a clown's jacket over grave ones. Another feature of humour is that the author forgets the public for whom he writes. He tells us that he does not care for us, that he needs neither to be understood nor approved, that he thinks and amuses himself by himself, and that if his taste and ideas displease us we have only to take ourselves off. He wishes to be refined and original at his ease; he is at home in his book, and with closed doors, he gets into his slippers, dressing-gown, often with his feet in the air, sometimes without a

shirt. Carlyle has a style of his own, and marks his idea in his own fashion ; it is our business to understand it. He alludes to a saying of Goethe, or Shakspeare, or to an anecdote which strikes him at the moment ; so much the worse for us if we do not know it. He shouts when the fancy takes him ; the worse for us if our ears do not like it. He writes on the caprice of his imagination, with all the starts of invention ; the worse for us if our mind goes at a different pace. He catches on the wing all the shades, all the oddities of his conception ; the worse for us if ours cannot reach them. A last feature of humour is the irruption of violent joviality, buried under a heap of sadness. Absurd incongruity appears unexpected. Physical nature, hidden and oppressed under habits of melancholic reflection, is laid bare for an instant. We see a grimace, a clown's gesture, then everything resumes its wonted gravity. Add lastly the unforeseen flashes of imagination. The humorist covers a poet ; suddenly, in the monotonous mist of prose, at the end of an argument, a vista opens up ; beautiful or ugly, it matters not ; it is enough that it strikes our eyes. These inequalities fairly paint the solitary, energetic, imaginative German, a lover of violent contrasts, based on personal and gloomy reflection, with sudden up-wellings of physical instinct, so different from the Latin and classical races, races of orators or artists, where they never write but with an eye to the public, where they relish only consequent ideas, are only happy in the spectacle of harmonious forms, where the fancy is regulated, and voluptuousness appears natural. Carlyle is profoundly German, nearer to the primitive stock than any of his contemporaries, strange and unexampled in his fancies and his

pleasantries; he calls himself "a bemired aurochs or urus of the German woods, . . . the poor wood-ox so bemired in the forests."¹ For instance, his first book *Sartor Resartus*, which is a clothes-philosophy, contains, *à propos* of aprons and breeches, metaphysics, politics, psychology. Man, according to him, is a dressed animal. Society has clothes for its foundation. "How, without Clothes, could we possess the master-organ, soul's seat, and true pineal gland of the Body social: I mean, a PURSE:"²

"To the eye of vulgar Logic," says he, "what is man? An omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason what is he? A Soul, a Spirit, and divine Apparition. Round his mysterious ME, there lies, under all those wool-rags, a Garment of Flesh (or of Senses) contextured in the Loom of Heaven; whereby he is revealed to his like, and dwells with them in UNION and DIVISION; and sees and fashions for himself a Universe, with azure Starry Spaces, and long Thousands of Years. Deep-hidden is he under that strange Garment; amid Sounds and Colours and Forms, as it were, swathed-in, and inextricably over-shrouded: yet it is skywoven, and worthy of a God."³

The paradox continues, at once eccentric and mystical, hiding theories under follies, mixing together fierce ironies, tender pastorals, love-stories, explosions of rage, and carnival pictures. He says well:

"Perhaps the most remarkable incident in Modern History is not the Diet of Worms, still less the battle of Austerlitz, Wagram, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other Battle; but an incident passed carelessly over by most Historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others: namely, George Fox's making to himself a suit of Leather."⁴

¹ *Life of Sterling.*

² *Sartor Resartus*, bk. i. ch. x.; *Pure Reason.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* bk. iii. ch. i.; *Incident in Modern History.*

For, thus clothed for the rest of his life, lodging in a tree and eating wild berries, man could remain idle and invent Puritanism, that is, conscience-worship, at his leisure. This is how Carlyle treats the ideas which are dearest to him. He jests in connection with the doctrine, which was to employ his life and occupy his whole soul.

Should we like an abstract of his politics, and his opinion about his country? He proves that in the modern transformation of religions two principal sects have risen, especially in England; the one of "Poor Slaves," the other of Dandies. Of the first he says:

"Something Monastic there appears to be in their Constitution: we find them bound by the two Monastic Vows, of Poverty and Obedience; which Vows, especially the former, it is said, they observe with great strictness; nay, as I have understood it, they are pledged, and be it by any solemn Nazarene ordination or not, irrevocably consecrated thereto, even *before* birth. That the third Monastic Vow, of Chastity, is rigidly enforced among them, I find no ground to conjecture.

"Furthermore, they appear to imitate the Dandiacal Sect in their grand principle of wearing a peculiar Costume. . . . Their raiment consists of innumerable skirts, lappets, and irregular wings, of all cloths and of all colours; through the labyrinthic intricacies of which their bodies are introduced by some unknown process. It is fastened together by a multiplex combination of buttons, thrums, and skewers; to which frequently is added a girdle of leather, of hempen or even of straw rope, round the loins. To straw rope, indeed, they seem partial, and often wear it by way of sandals. . . .

"One might fancy them worshippers of Hertha, or the Earth: for they dig and affectionately work continually in her bosom; or else, shut up in private Oratories, meditate and manipulate the substances derived from her; seldom looking-up towards

the Heavenly Luminaries, and then with comparative indifference. Like the Druids, on the other hand, they live in dark dwellings; often even breaking their glass-windows, where they find such, and stuffing them up with pieces of raiment, or other opaque substances, till the fit obscurity is restored. . . .

"In respect of diet they have also their observances. All Poor Slaves are Rhizophagous (or Root-eaters); a few are Ichthyophagous, and use Salted Herrings; other animal food they abstain from; except indeed, with perhaps some strange inverted fragment of a Brahminical feeling, such animals as die a natural death. Their universal sustenance is the root named Potato, cooked by fire alone. . . . In all their Religious Solemnities, Potheen is said to be an indispensable requisite, and largely consumed."¹

Of the other sect he says:

"A certain touch of Manicheism, not indeed in the Gnostic shape, is discernible enough: also (for human Error walks in a cycle, and reappears at intervals) a not-inconsiderable resemblance to that Superstition of the Athos Monks, who by fasting from all nourishment, and looking intensely for a length of time into their own navels, came to discern therein the true Apocalypse of Nature, and Heaven Unveiled. To my own surmise, it appears as if this Dandiacal Sect were but a new modification, adapted to the new time, of that primeval Superstition, *Self-worship*. . . .

"They affect great purity and separatism; distinguish themselves by a particular costume (whereof some notices were given in the earlier part of this Volume); likewise, so far as possible, by a particular speech (apparently some broken *Lingua-franca*, or English-French); and, on the whole, strive to maintain a true Nazarene deportment, and keep themselves unspotted from the world."

"They have their Temples, whereof the chief, as the Jewish

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. x; *The Dandiacal Body*.

Temple did, stands in their metropolis ; and is named *Aimack's*, a word of uncertain etymology. They worship principally by night ; and have their Highpriests and Highpriestesses, who, however, do not continue for life. The rites, by some supposed to be of the Menadic sort, or perhaps with an Eleusinian or Cabiric character, are held strictly secret. Nor are Sacred Books wanting to the Sect ; these they call *Fashionable Novels* : however, the Canon is not completed, and some are canonical, and others not."¹ . . .

Their chief articles of faith are :

" 1. Coats should have nothing of the triangle about them ; at the same time, wrinkles behind should be carefully avoided.

" 2. The collar is a very important point : it should be low behind, and slightly rolled.

" 3. No licence of fashion can allow a man of delicate taste to adopt the posterial luxuriance of a Hottentot.

" 4. There is safety in a swallow-tail.

" 5. The good sense of a gentleman is nowhere more finely developed than in his rings.

" 6. It is permitted to mankind, under certain restrictions, to wear white waistcoats.

" 7. The trousers must be exceedingly tight across the hips.

" All which Propositions I, for the present, content myself with modestly but peremptorily and irrevocably denying."²

This premised, he draws conclusions :

" I might call them two boundless and indeed unexampled \Electric Machines (turned by the ' Machinery of Society'), with batteries of opposite quality ; Drudgism the Negative, Dandyism the Positive : one attracts hourly towards it and appropriates all the Positive Electricity of the nation (namely, the Money thereof) ; the other is equally busy with the Negative (that is to say the Hunger), which is equally potent. Hitherto you see

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. x. ; *The Dandiacal Body*. ² *Ibid.*

only partial transient sparkles and sputters : but wait a little, till the entire nation is in an electric state ; till your whole vital Electricity, no longer healthfully Neutral, is cut into two isolated portions of Positive and Negative (of Money and of Hunger) ; and stands there bottled-up in two World-Batteries ! The stirring of a child's finger brings the two together ; and then—What then ? The Earth is but shivered into impalpable smoke by that Doom's-thunderpeal : the Sun misses one of his Planets in Space, and thenceforth there are no eclipses of the Moon. Or better still, I might liken—" ¹

He stops suddenly, and leaves you to your conjectures. This bitter pleasantry is that of an enraged or despairing man, who designedly, and simply by reason of the violence of his passion, would restrain it and force himself to laugh ; but whom a sudden shudder at the end reveals just as he is. In one place Carlyle says that there is, at the bottom of the English character, underneath all its habits of calculation and coolness, an inextinguishable furnace :

" Deep hidden it lies, far down in the centre, like genial central fire, with stratum after stratum of arrangement, traditional method, composed productiveness, all built above it, vivified and rendered fertile by it : justice, clearness, silence, perseverance unhasting, unresting diligence, hatred of disorder, hatred of injustice, which is the worst disorder, characterise this people : the inward fire we say, as all such fires would be, is hidden in the centre. Deep hidden, but awakenable, but immeasurable ; let no man awaken it."

It is a fire of extraordinary fierceness, as the rage of devoted Berserkirs, who, once rushing to the heat of the battle, felt no more their wounds, and lived, fought,

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. x. ; *The Dandiacal Body*.

and killed, pierced with strokes, the least of which would have been mortal to an ordinary man. It is this destructive frenzy, this rousing of inward unknown powers, this loosening of a ferocity, enthusiasm, and imagination disordered and not to be bridled, which appeared in these men at the Renaissance and the Reformation, and a remnant of which still endures in Carlyle. Here is a vestige of it, in a passage almost worthy of Swift, which is the abstract of his customary emotions, and at the same time his conclusion on the age in which we live :

“Supposing swine (I mean four-footed swine), of sensibility and superior logical parts, had attained such culture ; and could, after survey and reflection, jot down for us their notion of the Universe, and of their interests and duties there,—might it not well interest a discerning public, perhaps in unexpected ways, and give a stimulus to the languishing book-trade ? The votes of all creatures, it is understood at present, ought to be had ; that you may ‘legislate’ for them with better insight. ‘How can you govern a thing,’ say many, ‘without first asking its vote ?’ Unless, indeed, you already chance to know its vote,—and even something more, namely, what you are to think of its vote ; what it wants by its vote ; and, still more important, what Nature wants,—which latter, at the end of the account, —the only thing that will be got !—Pig Propositions, in a rough form, are somewhat as follows :

“1. The Universe, so far as sane conjecture can go, is an immeasurable Swine’s-trough, consisting of solid and liquid, and of other contrasts and kinds ;—especially consisting of attainable and unattainable, the latter in immensely greater quantities for most pigs.

“2. Moral evil is unattainability of Pig’s-wash ; moral good, attainability of ditto.

“3. ‘What is Paradise, or the State of Innocence ?’ Para-

dise, called also State of Innocence, Age of Gold, and other names, *was* (according to Pigs of weak judgment) unlimited attainability of Pig's-wash ; perfect fulfilment of one's wishes, so that the Pig's imagination could not outrun reality ; a fable and an impossibility, as Pigs of sense now see.

" 4. 'Define the Whole Duty of Pigs.' It is the mission of universal Pighood, and the duty of all Pigs, at all times, to diminish the quantity of unattainable and increase that of attainable. All knowledge and device and effort ought to be directed thither and thither only : Pig science, Pig enthusiasm and Devotion have this one aim. It is the Whole Duty of Pigs.

" 5. Pig Poetry ought to consist of universal recognition of the excellence of Pig's-wash and ground barley, and the felicity of Pigs whose trough is in order, and who have had enough : Hrumph !

" 6. The Pig knows the weather ; he ought to look out what kind of weather it will be.

" 7. 'Who made the Pig?' Unknown ;—perhaps the Pork-butcher.

" 8. 'Have you Law and Justice in Pigdom?' Pigs of observation have discerned that there is, or was once supposed to be, a thing called justice. Undeniably at least there is a sentiment in Pig-nature called indignation, revenge, etc., which, if one Pig provoke another, comes out in a more or less destructive manner : hence laws are necessary, amazing quantities of laws. For quarrelling is attended with loss of blood, of life, at any rate with frightful effusion of the general stock of Hog's-wash, and ruin (temporary ruin) to large sections of the universal Swine's trough : wherefore let justice be observed, that so quarrelling be avoided.

" 9. 'What is justice?' Your own share of the general Swine's-trough, not any portion of my share.

" 10. 'But what is 'my' share?' Ah ! there, in fact, lies the grand difficulty ; upon which Pig science, meditating this long while, can settle absolutely nothing. My share—hrumph !

—my share is, on the whole, whatever I can contrive to get without being hanged or sent to the hulks."¹

Such is the mire in which he plunges modern life, and, beyond all others, English life; drowning at the same time, and in the same filth, the positive mind, the love of comfort, industrial science, Church, State, philosophy, and law. This cynical catechism, thrown in amidst furious declamations, gives, I think, the dominant note of this strange mind: it is this mad tension which constitutes his talent; which produces and explains his images and incongruities, his laughter and his rages. There is an English expression which cannot be translated into French, but which depicts this condition, and illustrates the whole physical constitution of the race: *His blood is up*. In fact, the cold and phlegmatic temperament covers the surface; but when the roused blood has swept through the veins, the fevered animal can only be glutted by devastation, and be satiated by excess.

III.

It seems as though a soul so violent, so enthusiastic, so savage, so abandoned to imaginative follies, so entirely without taste, order, and measure, would be capable only of rambling, and expending itself in hallucinations, full of sorrow and danger. In fact, many of those who had this temperament, and who were his genuine forefathers—the Norse pirates, the poets of the sixteenth century, the Puritans of the seventeenth—were madmen, hurting others and themselves, bent on devas-

¹ *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, 1850: *Jesuitism*, 28.

tating things and ideas, destroying the public security and their own heart. Two entirely English barriers have restrained and directed Carlyle: the sentiment of actuality, which is the positive spirit, and of the sublime, which makes the religious spirit; the first turned him to real things, the other furnished him with the interpretation of real things: instead of being sickly and visionary, he became a philosopher and a historian.

IV.

We must read his history of Cromwell to understand how far this sentiment of actuality penetrates him; with what knowledge it endows him; how he rectifies dates and texts; how he verifies traditions and genealogies; how he visits places, examines the trees, looks at the brooks, knows the agriculture, prices, the whole domestic and rural economy, all the political and literary circumstances; with what minuteness, precision, and vehemence he reconstructs before his eyes and before ours the external picture of objects and affairs, the internal picture of ideas and emotions. And it is not simply on his part conscience, habit, or prudence, but need and passion. In this great obscure void of the past, his eyes fix upon the rare luminous points as on a treasure. The black sea of oblivion has swallowed up the rest: the million thoughts and actions of so many million beings have disappeared, and no power will make them rise again to the light. These few points subsist alone, like the summits of the highest rocks of a submerged continent. With what ardour, what deep feeling for the destroyed worlds, of which these

rocks are the remains, does the historian lay upon them his eager hands, to discover from their nature and structure some revelation of the great drowned regions, which no eye shall ever see again! A number, a trifling detail about expense, a petty phrase of barbarous Latin, is priceless in the sight of Carlyle. I should like you to read the commentary with which he surrounds the chronicle of the monk Jocelin of Brakelond,¹ to show you the impression which a proved fact produces on such a soul; all the attention and emotion that an old barbarous word, a bill from the kitchen, summons up:

"Behold, therefore, this England of the year 1200 was no chimerical vacuity or dreamland, peopled with mere vaporous Fantasma, Rymer's *Fœdera*, and Doctrines of the Constitution; but a green solid place, that grew corn and several other things. The sun shone on it; the vicissitude of seasons and human fortunes. Cloth was woven and worn; ditches were dug, furrow-fields ploughed, and houses built. Day by day all men and cattle rose to labour, and night by night returned home weary to their several lairs. . . . The *Dominus Rex*, at departing, gave us 'thirteen *sterlingii*,' one shilling and one penny, to say a mass for him. . . . For king Lackland *was* there, verily he. . . . There, we say, is the grand peculiarity; the immeasurable one; distinguishing to a really infinite degree, the poorest historical Fact from all Fiction whatsoever. 'Fiction,' 'Imagination,' 'Imaginative poetry,' etc. etc., except as the vehicle for truth, or is fact of some sort . . . what is it?² . . . And yet these grim old walls are not a diletantism and dubiety; they are an earnest fact. It was a most real and serious purpose they were built for! Yes, another world it was, when these black ruins, white in their new mortar and fresh chiselling, first saw the sun as walls, long ago. . . . Their architecture, belfries,

¹ In *Past and Present*, bk. ii.

² *Ibid.* ch. i.; *Jocelin of Brakelond*.

land-carucates! Yes,—and that is but a small item of the matter. Does it never give thee pause, this other strange item of it, that men then had a *soul*,—not by hearsay alone, and as a figure of speech; but as a truth that they *knew* and practically went upon!"¹

And then he tries to resuscitate this soul before our eyes; for this is his special feature, the special feature of every historian who has the sentiment of actuality, to understand that parchments, walls, dress, bodies themselves, are only cloaks and documents; that the true fact is the inner feeling of men who have lived, that the only important fact is the state and structure of their soul, that the first and sole business is to reach that inner feeling, for that all else diverges from it. We must tell ourselves this fact over and over again; history is but the history of the heart; we have to search out the feelings of past generations, and nothing else. This is what Carlyle perceives; man is before him, risen from the dead; he penetrates within him, sees that he feels, suffers, and wills, in that special and individual manner, now absolutely lost and extinguished, in which he did feel, suffer, and will. And he looks upon this sight, not coldly, like a man who only half sees things in a gray mist, indistinctly and uncertain, but with all the force of his heart and sympathy, like a convinced spectator, for whom past things, once proved, are as present and visible as the corporeal objects which his hand handles and touches, at the very moment. He feels this fact so clearly, that he bases upon it all his philosophy of history. In his opinion, great men, kings, writers, prophets, and poets, are only great in this sense: "It is the property of the hero, in every

¹ In *Past and Present*, ch. ii.; *St. Edmondsbury*.

time, in every place, in every situation, that he comes back to reality; that he stands upon things, and not shows of things."¹ The great man discovers some unknown or neglected fact, proclaims it; men hear him, follow him; and this is the whole of history. And not only does he discover and proclaim it, but he believes and sees it. He believes it, not as hearsay or conjecture, like a truth simply probable and handed down; he sees it personally, face to face with absolute and indomitable faith; he deserts opinion for conviction, tradition for intuition. Carlyle is so steeped in his process, that he imputes it to all great men. And he is not wrong, for there is none more potent. Wherever he penetrates with this lamp, he carries a light not known before. He pierces mountains of paper erudition, and enters into the hearts of men. Everywhere he goes beyond political and conventional history. He divines characters, comprehends the spirit of extinguished ages, feels better than any Englishman, better than Macaulay himself, the great revolutions of the soul. He is almost German in his power of imagination, his antiquarian perspicacity, his broad general views, and yet he is no dealer in guesses. The national common sense and the energetic craving for profound belief retain him on the limits of supposition; when he does guess, he gives it for what it is worth. He has no taste for hazardous history. He rejects hearsay and legends; he accepts only partially, and under reserve, the Germanic etymologies and hypotheses. He wishes to draw from history a positive and active law for himself and us. He expels and tears away from it all the doubtful and agreeable additions which scientific curio-

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, 1868.

sity and romantic imagination accumulate. He puts aside this parasitic growth to seize the useful and solid wood. And when he has seized it, he drags it so energetically before us, in order to make us touch it, he handles it in so violent a manner, he places it under such a glaring light, he illuminates it by such coarse contrasts of extraordinary images, that we are infected, and in spite of ourselves reach the intensity of his belief and vision.

He goes beyond, or rather is carried beyond this. The facts seized upon by this vehement imagination are melted in it as in a fire. Beneath this fury of conception, every thing wavers. Ideas, changed into hallucinations, lose their solidity, realities are like dreams; the world, appearing in a nightmare, seems no more than a nightmare; the attestation of the bodily senses loses its weight before inner visions as lucid as itself. Man finds no longer a difference between his dreams and his perceptions. Mysticism enters like smoke within the overheated walls of a collapsing imagination. It was thus that it once penetrated into the ecstasies of ascetic Hindoos, and into the philosophy of our first two centuries. Throughout, the same state of the imagination has produced the same teaching. The Puritans, Carlyle's true ancestors, were inclined to it. Shakspeare reached it by the prodigious tension of his poetic dreams, and Carlyle ceaselessly repeats after him that "we are such stuff as dreams are made of." This real world, these events so harshly followed up, circumscribed, and handled, are to him only apparitions; the universe is divine. "Thy daily life is girt with wonder, and based on wonder; thy very blankets and breeches are miracles. . . . The unspeakable divine significance, full

of splendour, and wonder, and terror, lies in the being of every man and of everything; the presence of God who made every man and thing."

'Atheistic science babbles poorly of it, with scientific nomenclatures, experiments, and what-not, as if it were a poor dead thing, to be bottled up in Leyden jars, and sold over counters: but the natural sense of man, in all times, if he will honestly apply his sense, proclaims it to be a living thing,—ah, an unspeakable, godlike thing; towards which the best attitude for us, after never so much science, is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship if not in words, then in silence."¹

In fact, this is the ordinary position of Carlyle. It ends in wonder. Beyond and beneath objects, he perceives as it were an abyss, and is interrupted by shudderings. A score of times, a hundred times in the *History of the French Revolution*, we have him suspending his narrative, and falling into a reverie. The immensity of the black night in which the human apparitions rise for an instant, the fatality of the crime which, once committed, remains attached to the chain of events as by a link of iron, the mysterious conduct which impels these floating masses to an unknown but inevitable end, are the great and sinister images which haunt him. He dreams anxiously of this focus of existence, of which we are only the reflection. He walks fearfully amongst this people of shadows, and tells himself that he too is a shadow. He is troubled by the thought that these human phantoms have their substance elsewhere, and will answer to eternity for their short passage. He exclaims and trembles at the idea of this motionless world, of which ours is but the mutable figure. He divines

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, i.; *The Hero as Divinity*.

in it something august and terrible. For he shapes it, and he shapes our world according to his own mind; he defines it by the emotions which he draws from it, and figures it by the impressions which he receives from it. A moving chaos of splendid visions, of infinite perspectives, stirs and boils within him at the least event which he touches; ideas abound, violent, mutually jostling, driven from all sides of the horizon amidst darkness and flashes of lightning; his thought is a tempest, and he attributes to the universe the magnificence, the obscurities, and the terrors of a tempest. Such a conception is the true source of religious and moral sentiment. The man who is penetrated by them passes his life, like a Puritan, in veneration and fear. Carlyle passes his in expressing and impressing veneration and fear, and all his books are preachings.

V.

Here truly is a strange mind, and one which makes us reflect. Nothing is more calculated to manifest truths than these eccentric beings. It will not be time misspent to discover the true position of this mind, and to explain for what reasons, and in what measure, he must fail to possess, or must attain to, beauty and truth.

As soon as we wish to begin to think, we have before us a whole and distinct object—that is, an aggregate of details connected amongst themselves, and separated from their surroundings. Whatever the object, tree, animal, sentiment, event, it is always the same; it always has parts, and these parts always form a whole: this group, more or less vast, comprises others, and is comprised in others, so that the smallest portion

of the universe is, like the entire universe, a group. Thus the whole employment of human thought is to reproduce groups. According as a mind is fit for this or not, it is capable or incapable. According as it can reproduce great or small groups, it is great or small. According as it can produce complete groups, or only some of their parts, it is complete or partial.

What is it, then, to reproduce a group? It is first to separate therefrom all the parts, then to arrange them in ranks according to their resemblances, then to form these ranks into families, lastly to combine the whole under some general and dominant mark; in short, to imitate the hierarchical classifications of science. But the task is not ended there: this hierarchy is not an artificial and external arrangement, but a natural and internal necessity. Things are not dead, but living; there is in them a force which produces and organises this group, which binds together the details and the whole, which repeats the type in all its parts. It is this force which the mind must reproduce in itself, with all its effects; it must perceive it by rebound and sympathy: this force must engender in the mind the entire group, and must be developed within it as without it: the series of internal ideas must imitate the series of external; the emotion must follow the conception, vision must complete analysis; the mind must become, like nature, creative. Then only can we say: We know.

All minds take one or other of these routes, and are divided by them into two great classes, corresponding to opposite temperaments. In the first are the plain men of science, the popularisers, orators, writers—in general, the classical ages and the Latin races; in the

second are the poets, prophets, commonly the inventors—in general, the romantic ages and the Germanic races. The first proceed gradually from one idea to the next: they are methodical and cautious; they speak for the world at large, and prove what they say; they divide the field which they would traverse into preliminary sections, in order to exhaust their subject; they march on straight and level roads, so as to be sure never to fall; they proceed by transitions, enumerations, summaries; they advance from general to still more general conclusions; they form the exact and complete classification of a group. When they go beyond simple analysis, their whole talent consists in eloquently pleading a thesis. Amongst the contemporaries of Carlyle, Macaulay is the most complete model of this species of mind. The others, after having violently and confusedly rummaged amongst the details of a group, rush with a sudden spring into the mother-notion. They see it then in its entirety; they perceive the powers which organise it; they reproduce it by divination; they depict it abridged by the most expressive and strangest words; they are not capable of decomposing it into regular series, they always perceive in a lump. They think only by sudden concentrations of vehement ideas. They have a vision of distant effects, or living actions; they are revealers or poets. Michelet, amongst the French, is the best example of this form of intellect, and Carlyle is an English Michelet.

He knows it, and argues plausibly that genius is an intuition, an insight: "Our Professor's method is not, in any case, that of common school Logic, where the truths all stand in a row, each holding by the skirts of the other; but at best that of practical Reason, proceed-

ing by large Intuition over whole systematic groups and kingdoms; whereby we might say, a noble complexity, almost like that of Nature, reigns in his Philosophy, or spiritual Picture of Nature: a mighty maze, yet, as faith whispers, not without a plan."¹ Doubtless, but disadvantages nevertheless are not wanting; and, in the first place, obscurity and barbarism. In order to understand him, we must study laboriously, or else have precisely the same kind of mind as he. But few men are critics by profession, or natural seers; in general, an author writes to be understood, and it is annoying to end in enigmas. On the other hand, this visionary process is hazardous: when we wish to leap immediately into the inner and generative idea, we run the risk of falling short; the gradual progress is slower, but more sure. The methodical people, so much ridiculed by Carlyle, have at least the advantage over him in being able to verify all their steps. Moreover, these vehement divinations and assertions are very often void of proof. Carlyle leaves the reader to search for them: the reader at times does not search for them, and refuses to believe the soothsayer on his word. Consider, again, that affectation infallibly enters into this style. It must assuredly be inevitable, since Shakspeare is full of it. The simple writer, prosaic and rational, can always reason and stick to his prose; his inspiration has no gaps, and demands no efforts. On the contrary, prophecy is a violent condition which does not sustain itself. When it fails, it is replaced by grand gesticulation. Carlyle gets up the steam in order to continue glowing. He struggles hard; and this forced, perpetual epilepsy is a most shocking spectacle. We cannot

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. i. ch. viii.: *The World out of Clothes*.

endure a man who wanders, repeats himself, returns to oddities and exaggerations which he had already employed; makes a jargon of them, declaims, exclaims, and makes it a point, like a wretched bombastic comedian, to upset our nerves. Finally, when this species of mind coincides in a lofty mind with the habits of a gloomy preacher, it results in objectionable manners. Many will find Carlyle presumptuous, coarse; they will suspect from his theories, and also from his way of speaking, that he looks upon himself as a great man, neglected, of the race of heroes; that, in his opinion, the human race ought to put themselves in his hands, and trust him with their business. Certainly he lectures us, and with contempt. He despises his epoch; he has a sulky, sour tone; he keeps purposely on stilts. He disdains objections. In his eyes, opponents are not up to his form. He abuses his predecessors: when he speaks of Cromwell's biographers, he takes the tone of a man of genius astray amongst pedants. He has the superior smile, the resigned condescension of a hero who feels himself a martyr, and he only quits it, to shout at the top of his voice, like an ill-bred plebeian.

All this is redeemed, and more, by rare merits. He speaks truly: minds like his are the most fertile. They are almost the only ones which make discoveries. Pure classifiers do not invent; they are too dry. "To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathise with it." "Fantasy is the organ of the Godlike, the understanding is indeed thy window; too clear thou canst not make it; but fantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased." In more simple language, this means

that every object, animate or inanimate, is gifted with powers which constitute its nature and produce its development; that, in order to know it, we must recreate it in ourselves, with the train of its potentialities, and that we only know it entirely by inwardly perceiving all its tendencies, and inwardly seeing all its effects. And verily this process, which is the imitation of nature, is the only one by which we can penetrate nature; Shakspeare had it as an instinct, and Goethe as a method. There is none so powerful or delicate, so fitted to the complexity of things and to the structure of our mind. There is none more proper to renew our ideas, to withdraw us from formulas, to deliver us from the prejudices, with which education involves us, to overthrow the barriers in which our surroundings enclose us. It is by this that Carlyle escaped from conventional English ideas, penetrated into the philosophy and science of Germany, to think out again in his own manner the Germanic discoveries, and to give an original theory of man and of the universe.

§ 2.—VOCATION.

It is from Germany that Carlyle has drawn his greatest ideas. He studied there, he knows perfectly its literature and language, he sets this literature in the highest rank, he translated *Wilhelm Meister*, he wrote upon the German writers a long series of critical articles, he has just written a life of Frederick the Great. He is the best accredited and most original of the interpreters who have introduced the German mind into England. This is no small thing to do, for it is in such a work that every thinking person is now labouring.

I.

From 1780 to 1830 Germany has produced all the ideas of our historic age; and for half a century still, perhaps for a whole century, our great work will be to think them out again. The thoughts which have been born and have blossomed in a country, never fail to propagate themselves in neighbouring countries, and to be engrafted there for a season. That which is happening to us has happened twenty times already in the world; the growth of the mind has always been the same, and we may, with some assurance, foresee for the future what we observe in the past. At certain times appears an original form of mind, which produces a philosophy, a literature, an art, a science, and which, having renewed the form of man's thought, slowly and infallibly renews all his thoughts. All minds which seek and find are in the current; they only advance through it: if they oppose it, they are checked; if they deviate, they are slackened: if they assist it, they are carried beyond the rest. And the movement goes on so long as there remains anything to be discovered. When art has given all its works, philosophy all its theories, science all its discoveries, it stops; another form of mind takes the sway, or man ceases to think. Thus at the Renaissance appeared the artistic and poetic genius, which, born in Italy and carried into Spain, was there extinguished after a century and a half in the universal extinction, and which, with other characteristics, transplanted into France and England, ended after a hundred years in the refinements of mannerists and the follies of sectarians, having produced the Reformation, confirmed free thought, and founded science. Thus with

Dryden in England, and with Malherbe in France, was born the oratorical and classical spirit, which, having produced the literature of the seventeenth century and the philosophy of the eighteenth, dried up under the successors of Voltaire and Pope, and died after two hundred years, having polished Europe and raised the French Revolution. Thus at the end of the last century arose the philosophic German genius, which, having engendered a new metaphysics, theology, poetry, literature, linguistic science, an exegesis, erudition, descends now into the sciences, and continues its evolution. No more original spirit, more universal, more fertile in consequences of every scope and species, more capable of transforming and reforming everything, has appeared for three hundred years. It is of the same order as that of the Renaissance and of the Classical Age. It, like them, connects itself with the great works of contemporary intelligence, appears in all civilised lands, is propagated with the same inward qualities, but under different forms. It, like them, is one of the epochs of the world's history. It is encountered in the same civilisation and in the same races. We may then conjecture, without too much rashness, that it will have a like duration and destiny. We thus succeed in fixing with some precision our place in the endless stream of events and things. We know that we are almost in the midst of one of the partial currents which compose it. We can perceive the form of mind which directs it, and seek beforehand the ideas to which it conducts us.

II.

Wherein consists this form? In the power of discovering general ideas. No nation and no age has

possessed it in so high a degree as the Germans. This is their governing faculty; it is by this power that they have produced all that they have done. This gift is properly that of comprehension (*Begreifen*). By it we find the aggregate conceptions (*Begriffe*); we reduce under one ruling idea all the scattered parts of a subject; we perceive under the divisions of a group the common bond which unites them; we conciliate objections; we bring down apparent contrasts to a profound unity. It is the pre-eminent philosophical faculty; and, in fact, it is the philosophical faculty which has impressed its seal on all their works. By it, they vivified dry studies, which seemed only fit to occupy pedants of the academy or seminary. By it, they divined the involuntary and primitive logic which created and organised languages, the great ideas which are hidden at the bottom of every work of art, the secret poetic emotions and vague metaphysical intuitions which engendered religions and myths. By it, they perceived the spirit of ages, civilisations, and races, and transformed into a system of laws the history which was but a heap of facts. By it, they rediscovered or renewed the sense of dogmas, connected God with the world, man with nature, spirit with matter, perceived the successive chain and the original necessity of the forms, whereof the aggregate is the universe. By it, they created a science of linguistics, a mythology, a criticism, an æsthetics, an exegesis, a history, a theology and metaphysics, so new that they continued long incomprehensible, and could only be expressed by a special language. And this bent was so dominant, that it subjected to its empire even art and poetry. The poets by it have become

erudite, philosophical; they constructed their dramas, epics, and odes after prearranged theories, and in order to manifest general ideas. They rendered moral theses, historical periods, sensible; they created and applied æsthetics; they had no artlessness, or made their artlessness an instrument of reflection; they loved not their characters for themselves; they ended by transforming them into symbols; their philosophical ideas broke every instant out of the poetic shape in which they tried to enclose them; they have been all critics,¹ bent on constructing or reconstructing, possessing erudition and method, attracted to imagination by art and study, incapable of producing living beings unless by science and artifice, really systematical men, who, to express their abstract conceptions, employed, in place of formulas, the actions of personages and the music of verse.

III.

From this aptitude to conceive the aggregate, one sole idea could be produced—the idea of aggregates. In fact, all the ideas worked out for fifty years in Germany are reduced to one only, that of development (*Entwicklung*), which consists in representing all the parts of a group as jointly responsible and complementary, so that each necessitates the rest, and that, all combined, they manifest, by their succession and their contrasts, the inner quality which assembles and produces them. A score of systems, a hundred dreams, a hundred thousand metaphors, have variously figured or disfigured this fundamental idea. Despoiled of its trappings, it merely affirms the mutual dependence which unites the

¹ Goethe, the greatest of them all.

terms of a series, and attaches them all to some abstract property within them. If we apply it to Nature, we come to consider the world as a scale of forms, and, as it were, a succession of conditions, having in themselves the reason for their succession and for their existence, containing in their nature the necessity for their decay and their limitation, composing by their union an indivisible whole, which, sufficing for itself, exhausting all possibilities, and connecting all things, from time and space to existence and thought, resembles by its harmony and its magnificence some omnipotent and immortal god. If we apply it to man, we come to consider sentiments and thoughts as natural and necessary products, linked amongst themselves like the transformations of an animal or plant; which leads us to conceive religions, philosophies, literatures, all human conceptions and emotions, as necessary series of a state of mind which carries them away on its passage, which, if it returns, brings them back, and which, if we can reproduce it, gives us in consequence the means of reproducing them at will. These are the two doctrines which run through the writings of the two chief thinkers of the century, Hegel and Goethe. They have used them throughout as a method, Hegel to grasp the formula of everything, Goethe to obtain the vision of everything; they steeped themselves therein so thoroughly, that they have drawn thence their inner and habitual sentiments, their morality and their conduct. We may consider them to be the two philosophical legacies which modern Germany has left to the human race.

IV.

But these legacies have not been unmixed, and this passion for aggregate views has marred its proper work by its excess. It is rarely that the mind can grasp aggregates: we are imprisoned in too narrow a corner of time and space; our senses perceive only the surface of things; our instruments have but a small scope; we have only been experimentalising for three centuries; our memory is short, and the documents by which we dive into the past are only doubtful lights, scattered over an immense region, which they show by glimpses without illuminating them. To bind together the small fragments which we are able to attain, we have generally to guess the causes, or to employ general ideas so vast, that they might suit all facts; we must have recourse either to hypothesis or abstraction, invent arbitrary explanations, or be lost in vague ones. These, in fact, are the two vices which have corrupted German thought. Conjecture and formula have abounded. Systems have multiplied, some above the others, and broken out into an inextricable growth, into which no stranger dare enter, having found that every morning brought a new budding, and that the definitive discovery proclaimed over-night was about to be choked by another infallible discovery, capable at most of lasting till the morning after. The public of Europe was astonished to see so much imagination and so little common sense, pretensions so ambitious and theories so hollow, such an invasion of chimerical existences and such an overflow of useless abstractions, so strange a lack of discernment and so great a luxuriance of irrationality. The fact was, that folly and genius flowed

from the same source ; a like faculty, excessive and all-powerful, produced discoveries and errors. If to-day we behold the workshop of human ideas, overcharged as it is and encumbered by its works, we may compare it to some blast-furnace, a monstrous machine which day and night has flamed unwearingly, half darkened by choking vapours, and in which the raw ore, piled heaps on heaps, has descended bubbling in glowing streams into the channels in which it has become hard. No other furnace could have melted the shapeless mass, crusted over with the primitive scoræ ; this obstinate elaboration and this intense heat were necessary to overcome it. Now the heavy castings burden the earth ; their weight discourages the hands which touch them ; if we would turn them to some use, they defy us or break : as they are, they are of no use ; and yet as they are, they are the material for every tool, and the instrument of every work ; it is our business to cast them over again. Every mind must carry them back to the forge, purify them, temper them, recast them, and extract the pure metal from the rough mass.

V.

But every mind will re-forged them according to its own inner warmth ; for every nation has its original genius, in which it moulds the ideas elsewhere derived. Thus Spain, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, renewed in a different spirit Italian painting and poetry. Thus the Puritans and Jansenists thought out in new shapes primitive Protestantism ; thus the French of the eighteenth century widened and put forth the liberal ideas, which the English had applied

or proposed in religion and politics. It is so in the present day. The French cannot at once reach, like the Germans, lofty aggregate conceptions. They can only march step by step, starting from concrete ideas, rising gradually to abstract ideas, after the progressive methods and gradual analysis of Condillac and Descartes. But this slower route leads almost as far as the other; and, in addition, it avoids many wrong steps. It is by this route that we succeed in correcting and comprehending the views of Hegel and Goethe; and if we look around us, at the ideas which are gaining ground, we find that we are already arriving thither. Positivism, based on all modern experience, and freed since the death of its founder from his social and religious fancies, has assumed a new life, by reducing itself to noting the connection of natural groups and the chain of established sciences. On the other hand, history, novels, and criticism, sharpened by the refinements of Parisian culture, have made us acquainted with the laws of human events; nature has been shown to be an order of facts, man a continuation of nature; and we have seen a superior mind, the most delicate, the most lofty of our own time, resuming and modifying the German divinations, expounding in the French manner everything which the science of myth, religion, and language had stored up, beyond the Rhine, during the last sixty years.¹

VI.

The growth in England is more difficult; for the aptitude for general ideas is less, and the mistrust of general ideas is greater: they reject at once all that

¹ M. Renan.

remotely or nearly seems capable of injuring practical morality or established dogma. The positive spirit seems as if it must exclude all German ideas; and yet it is the positive spirit which introduces them. Thus theologians,¹ having desired to represent to themselves with entire clearness and certitude the characters of the New Testament, have suppressed the halo and mist in which distance enveloped them; they have figured them with their garments, gestures, accent, all the shades of emotion of their style, with the species of imagination which their age has imposed, amidst the scenery which they have looked upon, amongst the remains of former ages before which they have spoken, with all the circumstances, physical or moral, which learning and travel can render sensible, with all the comparisons which modern physiology and psychology could suggest; they have given us their precise and demonstrated, coloured and graphic idea; they have seen these personages, not through ideas and as myths, but face to face and as men. They have applied Macaulay's art to exegesis; and if the entire German erudition could pass unmutated through this crucible, its solidity, as well as its value, would be doubled.

But there is another wholly Germanic route by which German ideas may become English. This is the road which Carlyle has taken; by this, religion and poetry in the two countries are alike; by it the two nations are sisters. The sentiment of internal things (insight) is in the race, and this sentiment is a sort of philosophical divination. At need, the heart takes the place of the brain. The inspired, impassioned man penetrates into things; perceives the cause by the shock

¹ In particular, Stanley and Jowett.

which he feels from it; he embraces aggregates by the lucidity and velocity of his creative imagination; he discovers the unity of a group by the unity of the emotion which he receives from it. For as soon as we create, we feel within ourselves the force which acts in the objects of our thought; our sympathy reveals to us their sense and connection; intuition is a finished and living analysis; poets and prophets, Shakspeare and Dante, St. Paul and Luther, have been systematic theorists, without wishing it, and their visions comprise general conceptions of man and the universe. Carlyle's mysticism is a power of the same kind. He translates into a poetic and religious style German philosophy. He speaks, like Fichte, of the divine idea of the world, the reality which lies at the bottom of every apparition. He speaks, like Goethe, of the spirit which eternally weaves the living robe of Divinity. He borrows their metaphors, only he takes them literally. He considers the god, which they consider as a form or a law, as a mysterious and sublime being. He conceives by exaltation, by painful reverie, by a confused sentiment of the interweaving of existences, that unity of nature which they arrive at by dint of reasonings and abstractions. Here is a last route, steep doubtless, and little frequented, for reaching the summits from which German thought at first issued forth. Methodical analysis added to the co-ordination of the positive sciences; French criticism refined by literary taste and worldly observation; English criticism supported by practical common sense and positive intuition; lastly, in a niche apart, sympathetic and poetic imagination: these are the four routes by which the human mind is now proceeding to reconquer the sublime heights to which it believed itself

carried, and which it has lost. These routes all conduct to the same summit but with different prospects. That by which Carlyle has advanced, being the lengthiest, has led him to the strangest perspective. I will let him speak for himself; he will tell the reader what he has seen.

§ 3.—PHILOSOPHY, MORALITY, AND CRITICISM.

"However it may be with Metaphysics, and other abstract Science originating in the Head (*Verstand*) alone, no Life-Philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*), such as this of Clothes pretends to be, which originates equally in the Character (*Gemüth*), and equally speaks thereto, can attain its significance till the Character itself is known and seen."¹

Carlyle has related, under the name of Teufelsdröckh, all the succession of emotions which lead to this Life-Philosophy. They are those of a modern Puritan; the same doubts, despairs, inner conflicts, exaltations, and pangs, by which the old Puritans arrived at faith: it is their faith under other forms. With him, as with them, the spiritual and inner man frees himself from the exterior and carnal; perceives duty amidst the solicitations of pleasure; discovers God through the appearances of nature; and, beyond the world and the instincts of sense, sees a supernatural world and instinct.

I.

The specialty of Carlyle, as of every mystic, is to see a double meaning in everything. For him texts and objects are capable of two interpretations: the one gross, open to all, serviceable for ordinary life; the other sub-

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. i. ch. xi.; *Prospectus*.

lime, open to a few, serviceable to a higher life. Carlyle says :

"To the eye of vulgar Logic, what is man? An omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason what is he? A Soul, a Spirit, and divine Apparition. Round his mysterious ME, there lies, under all those wool-rags, a Garment of Flesh (or of Senses), contextured in the Loom of Heaven. . . . Deep-hidden is he under that strange Garment; amid Sounds and Colours and Forms, as it were, swathed-in, and inextricably over-shrouded: yet it is skywoven, and worthy of a God."¹

"For Matter, were it never so despicable, is Spirit, the manifestation of Spirit: were it never so honourable, can it be more? The thing Visible, nay, the thing Imagined, the thing in any way conceived as Visible, what is it but a Garment, a Clothing of the higher, celestial, Invisible, 'unimaginable, formless, dark with excess of bright?'"²

"All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, is not there at all: Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea, and *body* it forth."³

Language, poetry, arts, church, state, are only symbols:

"In the Symbol proper, what we can call a Symbol, there is ever, more or less distinctly and directly, some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite; the Infinite is made to blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and as it were, attainable there. By Symbols, accordingly, is man guided and commanded, made happy, made wretched. He everywhere finds himself encompassed with Symbols, recognised as such or not recognised: the Universe is but one vast Symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God;

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. i. ch. x.; *Pure Reason*.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* bk. i. ch. xi.; *Prospective*.

is not all that he does symbolical ; a revelation to Sense of the mystic god-given force that is in him ?”¹

Let us rise higher still and regard Time and Space, those two abysses which it seems nothing could fill up or destroy, and over which hover our life and our universe. “They are but forms of our thought. . . . There is neither Time nor Space ; they are but two grand fundamental, world-enveloping appearances, SPACE and TIME. These as spun and woven for us from before Birth itself, to clothe our celestial ME for dwelling here, and yet to blind it,—lie all embracing, as the universal canvas, or warp and woof, whereby all minor illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves.”² Our root is in eternity ; we seem to be born and to die, but actually, *we are*.

“Know of a truth that only the Time-shadows have perished, or are perishable ; that the real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, is even now and for ever. . . . Are we not Spirits, that are shaped into a body, into an Appearance ; and that fade away again into air and Invisibility !”³ “O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him ; but are, in very deed, Ghosts ! These Limbs, whence had we them ; this stormy Force ; this life-blood with its burning Passion ! They are dust and shadow ; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME ; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh.

“And again, do we not squeak and gibber (in our discordant, screech-owliah debatings and recriminatings) ; and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful ; or uproar (*poltern*), and revel in our

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. iii. ; *Symbols*.

² *Ibid.* bk. iii. ch. viii. ; *Natural Supernaturalism*.

³ *Ibid.*

mad Dance of the Dead,—till the scent of the morning air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day!"¹

What is there, then, beneath all these empty appearances? What is this motionless existence, whereof nature is but the "changing and living robe?" None knows; if the heart divines it, the mind perceives it not. "Creation, says one, lies before us like a glorious rainbow; but the sun that made it lies behind us, hidden from us." We have only the sentiment thereof, not the idea. We feel that this universe is beautiful and terrible, but its essence will remain ever unnamed. We have only to fall on our knees before this veiled face; wonder and adoration are our true attitude:

"The man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship), were he President of innumerable Royal Societies, and carried the whole *Mécanique Céleste* and *Hegel's Philosophy*, and the epitome of all Laboratories and Observatories, with their results, in his single head,—is but a Pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye. Let those who have Eyes look through him, then he may be useful.

"Thou wilt have no Mystery and Mysticism; wilt walk through thy world by the sunshine of what thou callest Truth, or even by the hand-lamp of what I call Attorney-Logic: and 'explain' all, 'account' for all, or believe nothing of it. Nay, thou wilt attempt laughter; whoso recognises the unfathomable, all-pervading domain of Mystery, which is everywhere under our feet and among our hands; to whom the Universe is an oracle and Temple, as well as a Kitchen and Cattle-stall,—he shall be a delirious Mystic; to him thou, with sniffing charity, wilt protrusively proffer thy Hand-lamp, and shriek, as one injured, when he kicks his foot through it."²

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. viii.; *Natural Supernaturalism*.

² *Ibid.* bk. i. ch. x. • *Pure Reason*.

"We speak of the Volume of Nature; and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God. To read it! Dost thou, does man, so much as well know the Alphabet thereof? With its Words, Sentences, and grand descriptive Pages, poetical and philosophical, spread out through Solar Systems, and Thousands of Years, we shall not try thee. It is a Volume written in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing; of which even Prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line. As for your Institutes, and Academies of Science, they strive bravely; and from amid the thick-crowded, inextricably intertwined hieroglyphic writing, pick out, by dexterous combination, some Letters in the vulgar Character and therefrom put together this and the other economic Recipe, of high avail in Practice."¹

Do we believe, perhaps,

"That Nature is more than some boundless Volume of such Recipes, or huge, well-nigh inexhaustible Domestic-Cookery Book, of which the whole secret will in this manner one day evolve itself?"² . . .

"And what is that Science, which the scientific head alone, were it screwed off, and (like the Doctor's in the Arabian tale) set in a basin, to keep it alive, could prosecute without shadow of a heart, but one other of the mechanical and menial handicrafts, for which the Scientific Head (having a soul in it) is too noble an organ? I mean that Thought without Reverence is barren, perhaps poisonous."³

Let the scales drop from our eyes, and let us look:

"Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade,

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. viii.; *Natural Supernaturalism*.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* bk. i. ch. x.; *Pure Reason*.

and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams." ¹

"Generation after generation takes to itself the form of a Body ; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends : one grinding in the mill of Industry ; one, hunter-like, climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science ; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow :—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled ; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane ; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth, then plunge again into the Inane. . . . But whence ?—O Heaven, whither ? Sense knows not ; Faith knows not ; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God."²

II.

This vehement religious poetry, charged as it is with memories of Milton and Shakspeare, is but an English transcription of German ideas. There is a fixed rule for transposing,—that is, for converting into one another the ideas of a positivist, a pantheist, a spiritualist, a mystic, a poet, a head given to images, and a head given to formulas. We may mark all the steps which lead simple philosophical conception to its extreme and violent state. Take the world as science shows it ; it is a regular group or series which has a law ; according to science, it is nothing more. As from the law we

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. viii. ; *Natural Supernaturalism*.

² *Ibid.*

deduce the series, we may say that the law engenders it, and consider this law as a force. If we are an artist, we will seize in the aggregate the force, the series of effects, and the fine regular manner in which force produces the series. To my mind, this sympathetic representation is of all the most exact and complete: knowledge is limited, as long as it does not arrive at this, and it is complete when it has arrived there. But beyond, there commence the phantoms which the mind creates, and by which it dupes itself. If we have a little imagination, we will make of this force a distinct existence, situated beyond the reach of experience, spiritual, the principle and the substance of concrete things. That is a metaphysical existence. Let us add one degree to our imagination and enthusiasm, and we will say that this spirit, situated beyond time and space, is manifested through these, that it subsists and animates everything, that we have in it motion, existence, and life. When carried to the limits of vision and ecstasy, we will declare that this principle is the only reality, that the rest is but appearance: thenceforth we are deprived of all the means of defining it; we can affirm nothing of it, but that it is the source of things, and that nothing can be affirmed of it; we consider it as a grand unfathomable abyss; we seek, in order to come at it, a path other than that of clear ideas; we extol sentiment, exaltation. If we have a gloomy temperament, we seek it, like the sectarians, painfully, amongst prostrations and agonies. By this scale of transformations, the general idea becomes a poetical, then a philosophical, then a mystical existence; and German metaphysics, concentrated and heated, is changed into English Puritanism.

III.

What distinguishes this mysticism from others is its practicality. The Puritan is troubled not only about what he ought to believe, but about what he ought to do; he craves an answer to his doubts, but especially a rule for his conduct; he is tormented by the notion of his ignorance, as well as by the horror of his vices; he seeks God, but duty also. In his eyes the two are but one; moral sense is the promoter and guide of philosophy:

“Is there no God, then: but at best an absentee God, sitting idle, ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his Universe, and *seeing* it go? Has the word Duty no meaning; is what we call Duty no divine Messenger and Guide, but a false earthly Fantasm, made-up of Desire and Fear, of emanations from the gallows and from Dr. Graham's Celestial-Bed? Happiness of an approving Conscience! Did not Paul of Tarsus, whom admiring men have since named Saint, feel that *he* was the ‘chief of sinners;’ and Nero of Rome, jocund in spirit (*wohlgemuth*), spend much of his time in fiddling? Foolish Word-monger and Motive-grinder, who in thy Logic-mill hast an earthly mechanism for the Godlike itself, and wouldst fain grind me out Virtue from the husks of pleasure,—I tell thee, Nay!”¹

There is an instinct within us which says Nay. We discover within us something higher than love of happiness,—the love of sacrifice. That is the divine part of our soul. We perceive in it and by it the God, who otherwise would continue ever unknown. By it we penetrate an unknown and sublime world. There is an extraordinary state of the soul, by which it leaves

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. ii. ch. vii.; *The Everlasting No*.

selfishness, renounces pleasure, cares no more for itself, adores pain, comprehends holiness.¹

This obscure beyond, which the senses cannot reach, the reason cannot define, which the imagination figures as a king and a person; this is holiness, this is the sublime. "The hero is he who lives in the inward sphere of things, in the True, Divine, Eternal, which exists always, unseen to most, under the Temporary, Trivial; his being is in that. . . . His life is a piece of the everlasting heart of nature itself."² Virtue is a revelation, heroism is a light, conscience a philosophy; and we shall express in the abstract this moral mysticism, by saying that God, for Carlyle, is a mystery whose only name is the Ideal.

IV.

This faculty for perceiving the inner sense of things, and this disposition to search out the moral sense of things, have produced in him all his doctrines, and first his Christianity. This Christianity is very broad: Carlyle takes religion in the German manner, after a symbolical fashion. This is why he is called a Pantheist, which in plain language means a madman or a rogue. In England, too, he is exorcised. His friend Sterling sent him long dissertations, to bring him back to a personal God. Every moment he wounds to the

¹ "Only this I know, If what thou namest Happiness be our true aim, then are we all astray. With Stupidity and sound Digestion man may front much. But what, in these dull, unimaginative days, are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver! Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold: there brandishing our frying-pan, as censor, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect!"—*Sartor Resartus*, bk. II. ch. vii.

² *Lectures on Heroes.*

quick the theologians, who make of the prime cause an architect or an administrator. He shocks them still more when he touches upon dogma; he considers Christianity as a myth, of which the essence is the Worship of Sorrow:

“Knowest thou that ‘*Worship of sorrow?*’ The Temple thereof founded some eighteen centuries ago, now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures: nevertheless, venture forward; in a low crypt, arched out of falling fragments, thou findest the Altar still there, and its sacred Lamp perennially burning.”¹

But its guardians know it no more. A frippery of conventional adornments hides it from the eyes of men. The Protestant Church in the nineteenth century, like the Catholic Church in the sixteenth, needs a reformation. We want a new Luther:

‘For if Government is, so to speak, the outward SKIN of the Body Politic, holding the whole together and protecting it; and if all your Craft-Guilds and Associations for Industry, of hand or of head, are the Fleshly Clothes, the muscular and osseous Tissues (lying *under* such SKIN), whereby Society stands and works;—then is Religion the inmost Pericardial and Nervous Tissue which ministers Life and warm Circulation to the whole . . .

“Meanwhile, in our era of the World, those same Church Clothes have gone sorrowfully out-at-elbows: nay, far worse, many of them have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade; and the mask still glares on you with its glass-eyes, in ghastly affectation of Life,—some generation and half after Religion has quite withdrawn from it, and in unnoticed nooks

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. ii. ch. ix.; *The Everlasting Yea*.

is weaving for herself new Vestures, wherewith to reappear and bless us, or our sons or grandsons." ¹

Christianity once reduced to the sentiment of abnegation, other religions resume, in consequence, dignity and importance. They are, like Christianity, forms of universal religion. "They have all had a truth in them, or men would not have taken them up." ² They are no quack's imposture or poet's dream. They are an existence more or less troubled by the mystery, august and infinite, which is at the bottom of the universe :

"Canopus shining down over the desert, with its blue diamond brightness (that wild blue spirit-like brightness, far brighter than we ever witness here), would pierce into the heart of the wild Ishmaelitic man, whom it was guiding through the solitary waste there. To his wild heart, with all feelings in it, with no *speech* for any feeling, it might seem a little eye, that Canopus, glancing-out on him from the great deep Eternity ; revealing the inner Splendour to him." ³

"Grand Lamaism," Popery itself, interpret after their fashion the sentiment of the divine ; therefore Popery itself is to be respected. "While a *pious* life remains capable of being led by it, . . . let it last as long as it can." ⁴ What matters if people call it idolatry ?

"Idol is *Eidolon*, a thing seen, a symbol. It is not God, but a symbol of God. . . . Is not all worship whatsoever a worship by Symbols, by *eidola*, or things seen ? . . . The most rigorous Puritan has his Confession of Faith, and intellectual Representation of Divine things, and worships thereby. . . . All creeds,

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iii. ch. ii. ; *Church Clothes*.

² *Lectures on Heroes*, i. ; *The Hero as Divinity*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* iv. ; *The Hero as Priest*.

liturgies, religious forms, conceptions that fitly invest religious feelings, are in this sense *eidola*, things seen. All worship whatsoever must proceed by Symbols, by Idols :—we may say, all Idolatry is comparative, and the worst Idolatry is only *more* idolatrous.”¹

The only detestable idolatry is that from which the sentiment has departed, which consists only in ceremonies learned by rote, in mechanical repetition of prayers, in decent profession of formulas not understood. The deep veneration of a monk of the twelfth century, prostrated before the relics of St. Edmund, was worth more than the conventional piety and cold philosophical religion of a Protestant of to-day. Whatever the worship, it is the sentiment which gives it its whole value. And this sentiment is that of morality :

“The one end, essence, and use of all religion past, present, and to come, was this only : To keep that same Moral Conscience or Inner Light of ours alive and shining. . . . All religion was here to remind us, better or worse, of what we already know better or worse, of the quite *infinite* difference there is between a Good man and a Bad ; to bid us love infinitely the one, abhor and avoid infinitely the other,—strive infinitely to be the one, and not to be the other. ‘All religion issues in due Practical Hero-worship.’”²

“All true Work is religion ; and whatsoever religion is not Work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will ; with me it shall have no harbour.”³

Though it has “no harbour” with Carlyle, it has elsewhere. We touch here the English and narrow feature

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, iv. ; *The Hero as Priest*.

² *Past and Present*, bk. iii. ch. xv. ; *Morrison Again*.

³ *Ibid.* bk. iii. ch. xii. ; *Reward*.

of this German and broad conception. There are many religions which are not moral; there are more still which are not practical. Carlyle would reduce the heart of man to the English sentiment of duty, and his imagination to the English sentiment of respect. The half of human poetry escapes his grasp. For if a part of ourselves raises us to abnegation and virtue, another part leads us to enjoyment and pleasure. Man is pagan as well as Christian; nature has two faces: several races, India, Greece, Italy, have only comprehended the second, and have had for religions merely the adoration of overflowing force and the ecstasy of grand imagination; or otherwise, the admiration of harmonious form, with the culture of pleasure, beauty, and happiness.

V.

His criticism of literary works is of the same character and violence, and has the same scope and the same limits, the same principle and the same conclusions, as his criticism of religious works. Carlyle has introduced the great ideas of Hegel and Goethe, and has confined them under the narrow discipline of Puritan sentiment.¹ He considers the poet, the writer, the artist, as an interpreter of "the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance;" as a revealer of the infinite, as representing his century, his nation, his age: we recognise here all the German formulas. They signify that the artist detects and expresses better than any one, the salient and durable features of the world which surrounds him, so that we might draw from his work a theory of man and of nature,

¹ *Lectures on Heroes; Miscellanies, passim.*

together with a picture of his race and of his time. This discovery has renewed criticism. Carlyle owes to it his finest views, his lessons on Shakspeare and Dante, his studies on Goethe, Dr. Johnson, Burns, and Rousseau. Thus, by a natural enthusiasm he becomes the herald of German literature; he makes himself the apostle of Goethe; he has praised him with a neophyte's fervour, to the extent of lacking on this subject skill and perspicacity; he calls him a Hero, presents his life as an example to all the men of our century; he will not see his paganism, manifest as it is, and so repellent to a Puritan. Through the same causes, he has made of Jean-Paul Richter, an affected clown, and an extravagant humorist, "a giant," a sort of prophet; he has heaped eulogy on Novalis and the mystic dreamers; he has set the democrat Burns above Byron; he has exalted Dr. Johnson, that honest pedant, the most grotesque of literary behemoths. His principle is, that in a work of the mind, form is little, the basis alone is important. As soon as a man has a profound sentiment, a strong conviction, his book is beautiful. A writing, be it what it will, only manifests the soul: if the soul is serious, if it is intimately and habitually shaken by the grave thoughts which ought to preoccupy a soul; if it loves what is good, is devoted, endeavours with its whole effort, without any mental reservation of interest or self-love, to publish the truth which strikes it, it has reached its goal. We have nothing to do with the talent; we need not to be pleased by beautiful forms; our sole object is to find ourselves face to face with the sublime; the whole destiny of man is to perceive heroism; poetry and art have no other employment or merit. We see how far and with what excess

Carlyle possesses the Germanic sentiment, why he loves the mystics, humorists, prophets, illiterate writers, and men of action, spontaneous poets, all who violate regular beauty through ignorance, brutality, folly, or deliberately. He goes so far as to excuse the rhetoric of Dr. Johnson, because Johnson was loyal and sincere; he does not distinguish in him the literary man from the practical; he avoids seeing the classic declaimer, a strange compound of Scaliger, Boileau, and La Harpe, majestically decked out in the Ciceronian gown, in order to see only a man of faith and conviction. Such a habit prevents a man seeing one half of things. Carlyle speaks with scornful indifference¹ of modern dilettantism, seems to despise painters, admits no sensible beauty. Wholly on the side of the authors, he neglects the artists; for the source of art is the sentiment of form; and the greatest artists, the Italians, the Greeks, did not know, like their priests and poets, any beauty beyond that of voluptuousness and force. Thence also it comes that he has no taste for French literature. The exact order, the fine proportions, the perpetual regard for the agreeable and proper, the harmonious structure of clear and consecutive ideas, the delicate picture of society, the perfection of style,—nothing which moves us, has attraction for him. His mode of comprehending life is too far removed from ours. In vain he tries to understand Voltaire, all he can do is to slander him:

“We find no heroism of character in him, from first to last; nay, there is not, that we know of, one great thought in all his six-and-thirty quartos. . . . He sees but a little way into Nature; the mighty All, in its beauty and infinite mys-

¹ *Life of Sterling.*

terious grandeur, humbling the small *me* into nothingness, has never even for moments been revealed to him ; only this and that other atom of it, and the differences and discrepancies of these two, has he looked into and noted down. His theory of the world, his picture of man and man's life is little ; for a poet and philosopher, even pitiful. 'The Divine idea, that which lies at the bottom of appearance,' was never more invisible to any man. He reads history not with the eyes of a devout seer, or even of a critic, but through a pair of mere anticatholic spectacles. It is not a mighty drama enacted on the theatre of Infinitude, with suns for lamps and Eternity as a background, . . . but a poor wearisome debating-club dispute, spun through ten centuries, between the *Encyclopédie* and the *Sorbonne*. . . . God's Universe is a larger patrimony of St. Peter, from which it were well and pleasant to hunt out the Pope. . . . The still higher praise of having had a right or noble aim cannot be conceded him without many limitations, and may, plausibly enough, be altogether denied. . . . The force necessary for him was nowise a great and noble one ; but small, in some respects a mean one, to be nimbly and seasonably put into use. The Ephesian temple, which it had employed many wise heads and strong arms for a lifetime to build, could be *unbuilt* by one madman, in a single hour."¹

These are big words ; we will not employ the like. I will simply say, that if a man were to judge Carlyle, as a Frenchman, as he judges Voltaire as an Englishman, he would draw a different picture of Carlyle from that which I am trying here to draw.

VI.

This trade of calumny was in vogue fifty years ago ; in fifty more it will probably have altogether ceased. The French are beginning to comprehend the gravity

¹ *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 4 vols. ; ii. *Voltaire*.

Puritans; perhaps the English will end by shending the gaiety of Voltaire: the first are ing to appreciate Shakspeare; the second will ess attempt to appreciate Racine. Goethe, the of all modern minds, knew well how to appre- both.¹ The critic must add to his natural and al soul five or six artificial and acquired souls, s flexible sympathy must introduce him to extinct ign sentiments. The best fruit of criticism is to ourselves from ourselves, to constrain us to allowance for the surroundings in which we live, ch us to distinguish objects themselves through ansient appearances, with which our character r age never fail to clothe them. Each person s them through glasses of diverse focus and hue, o one can reach the truth save by taking into t the form and tint which his glasses give to jects which he sees. Hitherto we have been ing and pummelling one another,—this man ng that things are green, another that they llow; others, again, that they are red; each ng his neighbour of seeing wrong, and being enuous. Now, at last, we are learning moral ; we are finding that the colour is not in the , but in ourselves; we pardon our neighbours ing differently from us; we recognise that they e red what to us appears blue, green what to us s yellow; we can even define the kind of glasses produces yellow, and the kind which produces divine their effects from their nature, predict to the tint under which the object we are about to t to them will appear, construct beforehand the

¹ See this double praise in *Wilhelm Meister*.

system of every mind, and perhaps one day free ourselves from every system. "As a poet," said Goethe, "I am a polytheist; as a naturalist, a pantheist; as a moral man, a deist; and in order to express my mind, I need all these forms." In fact, all these glasses are serviceable, for they all show us some new aspect of things. The important point is to have not one, but several, to employ each at the suitable moment, not to mind the particular colour of these glasses, but to know that behind these million moving poetical tints, optics only prove transformations governed by a law.

§ 4.—CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

I.

"Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world; the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these."¹

Whatever they be, poets, reformers, writers, men of action, revealers, he gives them all a mystical character:

"Such a man is what we call an *original* man; he comes to us at first-hand. A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. . . . Direct from the Inner Fact of things;—he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, i.; *The Hero as Divinity*.

that. Hearsays cannot hide it from him ; he is blind, homeless, miserable, following hearsays ; it glares in upon him. . . . It is from the heart of the world that he comes ; he is portion of the primal reality of things.”¹

In vain the ignorance of his age and his own imperfections mar the purity of his original vision ; he ever attains some immutable and life-giving truth ; for this truth he is listened to, and by this truth he is powerful. That which he has discovered is immortal and efficacious :

“The works of a man, bury them under what guano-mountains and obscene owl-droppings you will, do not perish, cannot perish. What of Heroism, what of Eternal Light was in a Man and his Life, is with very great exactness added to the Eternities ; remains forever a new divine portion of the Sum of Things.”²

“No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man’s life. Religion I find stand upon it. . . . What therefore is loyalty proper, the life-breath of all society, but an effluence of Hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great ? Society is founded on Hero-worship.”³

This feeling is the deepest part of man. It exists even in this levelling and destructive age : “I seem to see in this indestructibility of Hero-worship the everlasting adamant lower than which the confused wreck of revolutionary things cannot fall.”⁴

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, ii. ; *The Hero as Prophet*.

² *Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches*, iii. part x. ; *Death of the Protector*.

³ *Lectures on Heroes*, i. ; *The Hero as Divinity*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

II.

We have here a German theory, but transformed, made precise, thickened after the English manner. The Germans said that every nation, period, civilisation, had its *idea*; that is its chief feature, from which the rest were derived; so that philosophy, religion, arts, and morals, all the elements of thought and action, could be deduced from some original and fundamental quality, from which all proceeded and in which all ended. Where Hegel proposed an idea, Carlyle proposes a heroic sentiment. It is more palpable and moral. To complete his escape from the vague, he considers this sentiment in a hero. He must give to abstractions a body and soul; he is not at ease in pure conceptions, and wishes to touch a real being.

But this being, as he conceives it, is an abstract of the rest. For according to him, the hero contains and represents the civilisation in which he is comprised; he has discovered, proclaimed or practised an original conception, and in this his age has followed him. The knowledge of a heroic sentiment thus gives us a knowledge of a whole age. By this method Carlyle has emerged beyond biography. He has rediscovered the grand views of his masters. He has felt, like them, that a civilisation, vast and dispersed as it is over time and space, forms an indivisible whole. He has combined in a system of hero-worship the scattered fragments which Hegel united by a law. He has derived from a common sentiment the events which the Germans derived from a common definition. He has comprehended the deep and distant connection of things, such as bind a great man to his time, such as

connect the works of accomplished thought with the stutterings of infant thought, such as link the wise inventions of modern constitutions to the disorderly furies of primitive barbarism :

“ Silent, with closed lips, as I fancy them, unconscious that they were specially brave ; defying the wild ocean with its monsters, and all men and things ;—progenitors of our own Blakes and Nelsons. . . . Hrolf or Rollo, Duke of Normandy, the wild Sea-king, has a share in governing England at this hour.”¹

“ No wild Saint Dominics and Thebaïd Eremites, there had been no melodious Dante ; rough Practical Endeavour, Scandinavian and other, from Odin to Walter Raleigh, from Ulfila to Cranmer, enabled Shakspeare to speak. Nay, the finished Poet, I remark sometimes, is a symptom that his epoch itself has reached perfection and is finished ; that before long there will be a new epoch, new Reformers needed.”²

His great poetical or practical works only publish or apply this dominant idea ; the historian makes use of it, to rediscover the primitive sentiment which engenders them, and to form the aggregate conception which unites them.

III.

Hence a new fashion of writing history. Since the heroic sentiment is the cause of the other sentiments, it is to this the historian must devote himself. Since it is the source of civilisation, the mover of revolutions, the master and regenerator of human life, it is in this that he must observe civilisation, revolutions, and human life. Since it is the spring of every move-

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, i. ; *The Hero as Divinity*.

² *Ibid.* iv. ; *The Hero as Priest*.

ment, it is by this that we shall understand every movement. Let the metaphysicians draw up deductions and formulas, or the politicians expound situations and constitutions. Man is not an inert being, moulded by a constitution, nor a lifeless being expressed by formula; he is an active and living soul, capable of acting, discovering, creating, devoting himself, and before all, of daring; genuine history is an epic of heroism. This idea is, in my opinion, brilliant and luminous. For men have not done great things without great emotions. The first and sovereign motive of an extraordinary revolution is an extraordinary sentiment. Then we see appear and swell a lofty and all-powerful passion, which has burst the old dykes, and hurled the current of things into a new bed. All starts from this, and it is this which we must observe. Let us leave metaphysical formulas and political considerations, and regard the inner state of every mind. Let us quit bare narrative, forget abstract explanations, and study impassioned souls. A revolution is only the birth of a great sentiment. What is this sentiment, how is it bound to others, what is its degree, source, effect, how does it transform the imagination, understanding, common inclinations; what passions feed it, what proportion of folly and reason does it embrace—these are the main questions. If any one wishes to represent to me the history of Buddhism, he must show me the calm despair of the ascetics who, deadened by the contemplation of the infinite void, and by the expectation of final annihilation, attain in their monotonous quietude the sentiment of universal fraternity. If any one wishes to represent to me the history of Christianity, he must show me the soul of a Saint John or Saint Paul, the

sudden renewal of the conscience, the faith in invisible things, the transformation of a soul penetrated by the presence of a paternal God, the irruption of tenderness, generosity, abnegation, trust, and hope, which rescued the wretches oppressed under the Roman tyranny and decline. To explain a revolution, is to write a partial psychology; the analysis of critics and the divination of artists are the only instruments which can attain to it: if we would have it precise and profound, we must ask it of those who, through their profession or their genius, possess a knowledge of the soul—Shakspeare, Saint-Simon, Balzac, Stendhal. This is why we may occasionally ask it of Carlyle. And there is a history which we may ask of him in preference to all others, that of the Revolution which had conscience for its source, which set God in the councils of the state, which imposed strict duty, which provoked severe heroism. The best historian of Puritanism is a Puritan.

IV.

The history of Cromwell, Carlyle's masterpiece, is but a collection of letters and speeches, commented on and united by a continuous narrative. The impression which they leave is extraordinary. Grave constitutional histories hang heavy after this compilation. The author wished to make us comprehend a soul, the soul of Cromwell, the greatest of the Puritans, their chief, their abstract, their hero, and their model. His narrative resembles that of an eye-witness. A covenanter who should have collected letters, scraps of newspapers, and daily added reflections, interpretations, notes, and anecdotes, might have written just

such a book. At last we are face to face with Cromwell. We have his words, we can hear his tone of voice; we seize, around each action, the circumstances which produced it: we see him in his tent, in council, with the proper background, with his face and costume: every detail, the most minute, is here. And the sincerity is as great as the sympathy; the biographer confesses his ignorance, the lack of documents, the uncertainty; he is perfectly loyal though a poet and a sectarian. With him we simultaneously restrain and give free play to our conjectures; and we feel at every step, amidst our affirmations and our reservations, that we are firmly planting our feet upon the truth. Would that all history were like this, a selection of texts provided with a commentary! I would exchange for such a history all the regular arguments, all the beautiful colourless narrations, of Robertson and Hume. I can verify the judgment of the author whilst reading this; I no more think after him, but for myself; the historian does not obtrude himself between me and his subject. I see a fact, and not an account of a fact; the oratorical and personal envelope, with which a narrative covers the truth, disappears; I can touch the truth itself. And this Cromwell, with his Puritans, comes forth from the test, recreated and renewed. We divined pretty well already that he was not a mere man of ambition, a hypocrite, but we took him for a fanatic and hateful disputant. We considered these Puritans as gloomy madmen, shallow brains, and full of scruples. Let us quit our French and modern ideas, and enter into these souls: we shall find there something else than hypochondria, namely, a grand sentiment—am I a just man?

DAVID HUME



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And if God, who is perfect justice, were to judge me at this moment, what sentence would he pass upon me? —Such is the original idea of the Puritans, and through them came the Revolution into England. The feeling of the difference there is between good and evil, filled for them all time and space, and became incarnate, and expressed for them, by such words as Heaven and Hell. They were struck by the idea of duty. They examined themselves by this light, severely and without intermission; they conceived the sublime model of infallible and complete virtue; they were imbued therewith; they drowned in this absorbing thought all worldly prejudices and all inclinations of the senses; they conceived a horror even of imperceptible faults, which an honest mind will excuse in itself; they exacted from themselves absolute and continuous perfection, and they entered into life with a fixed resolve to suffer and do all, rather than deviate one step. We laugh at a revolution about surplices and chasubles; there was a sentiment of the divine underneath all these disputes about vestments. These poor folk, shopkeepers and farmers, believed, with all their heart, in a sublime and terrible God, and the manner how to worship Him was not a trifling thing for them:

“Suppose now it were some matter of vital concernment, some transcendent matter (as Divine worship is), about which your whole soul, struck dumb with its excess of feeling, knew not how to *form* itself into utterance at all, and preferred formless silence to any utterance there possible,—what should we say of a man coming forward to represent or utter it for you in the way of upholsterer-mummery? Such a man,—let him depart swiftly, if he love himself! You have lost your only

son ; are mute, struck down, without even tears : an importunate man importunately offers to celebrate Funeral Games for him in the manner of the Greeks."¹

This has caused the Revolution, and not the Writ of Shipmoney, or any other political vexation. " You may take my purse, . . . but the Self is mine and God my Maker's."² And the same sentiment which made them rebels, made them conquerors. Men could not understand how discipline could exist in an army in which an inspired corporal would reproach a lukewarm general. They thought it strange that generals, who sought the Lord with tears, had learned administration and strategy in the Bible. They wondered that madmen could be men of business. The truth is, that they were not madmen, but men of business. The whole difference between them and practical men whom we know, is that they had a conscience ; this conscience was their flame ; mysticism and dreams were but the smoke. They sought the true, the just ; and their long prayers, their nasal preachings, their quotations from the Bible, their tears, their anguish, only mark the sincerity and ardour with which they applied themselves to the search. They read their duty in themselves ; the Bible only aided them. At need they did violence to it, when they wished to verify by texts the suggestions of their own hearts. It was this sentiment of duty which united, inspired, and sustained them, which made their discipline, courage, and boldness ; which raised to ancient heroism Hutchinson, Milton, and Cromwell ; which instigated all decisive deeds, grand resolves, marvellous successes, the declaration of war, the trial

¹ *Lectures on Heroes*, vi. ; *The Hero as King*.

² *Ibid.*

of the king, the purge of Parliament, the humiliation of Europe, the protection of Protestantism, the sway of the seas. These men are the true heroes of England; they display, in high relief, the original characteristics and noblest features of England—practical piety, the rule of conscience, manly resolution, indomitable energy. They founded England, in spite of the corruption of the Stuarts and the relaxation of modern manners, by the exercise of duty, by the practice of justice, by obstinate toil, by vindication of right, by resistance to oppression, by the conquest of liberty, by the repression of vice. They founded Scotland, they founded the United States: at this day they are, by their descendants, founding Australia and colonising the world. Carlyle is so much their brother, that he excuses or admires their excesses—the execution of the king, the mutilation of Parliament, their intolerance, inquisition, the despotism of Cromwell, the theocracy of Knox. He sets them before us as models, and judges both past and present by them alone.

V.

Hence he saw nothing but evil in the French Revolution. He judges it as unjustly as he judges Voltaire, and for the same reasons. He understands our manner of acting no better than our manner of thinking. He looks for Puritan sentiment; and, as he does not find it, he condemns us. The idea of duty, the religious spirit, self-government, the authority of an austere conscience, can alone, in his opinion, reform a corrupt society; and none of all these are to be met with in French society. The philosophy which has produced and guided the Revolution was simply des-

tructive, proclaiming no other gospel but "that a lie cannot be believed! Philosophy knows only this: Her other relief is mainly that in spiritual, supra-sensual matters, no belief is possible." The theory of the *Rights of Man*, borrowed from Rousseau, is only a logical game, a pedantry almost as opportune as a "Theory of Irregular Verbs." The manners in vogue were the epicurism of Faublas. The morality in vogue was the promise of universal happiness. Incredulity, hollow rant, sensuality, were the mainsprings of this reformation. Men let loose their instincts and overturned the barriers. They replaced corrupt authority by unchecked anarchy. In what could a jacquerie of brutalised peasants, impelled by atheistical arguments, end?

"For ourselves, we answer that French Revolution means here the open violent Rebellion, and Victory, of disimprisoned Anarchy against corrupt, worn-out Authority.¹ . . .

"So thousandfold complex a Society ready to burst up from its infinite depths; and these men its rulers and healers, without life-rule for themselves—other life-rule than a Gospel according to Jean Jacques! To the wisest of them, what we must call the wisest, man is properly an accident under the sky. Man is without duty round him, except it be to make the Constitution. He is without Heaven above him, or Hell beneath him; he has no God in the world.

"While hollow languor and vacuity is the lot of the upper, and want and stagnation of the lower, and universal misery is very certain, what other thing is certain? . . . What will remain? The five unsatiated senses will remain, the sixth insatiable sense (of vanity); the whole *dæmoniac* nature of man will remain.

"Man is not what we call a happy animal; his appetite for sweet victual is too enormous. . . . (He cannot subsist) except

¹ *The French Revolution*, i. bk. vi. ch. i; *Makes the Constitution*.

by girding himself together for continual endeavour and endurance." ¹

But set the good beside the evil; put down virtues beside vices! These sceptics believed in demonstrated truth, and would have her alone for mistress. These logicians founded society only on justice, and risked their lives rather than renounce an established theorem. These epicureans embraced in their sympathies entire humanity. These furious men, these workmen, these hungry, threadbare peasants, fought on the frontiers for humanitarian interests and abstract principles. Generosity and enthusiasm abounded in France, as well as in England; acknowledge them under a form which is not English. These men were devoted to abstract truth, as the Puritan to divine truth; they followed philosophy, as the Puritans followed religion; they had for their aim universal salvation, as the Puritans had individual salvation. They fought against evil in society, as the Puritans fought it in the soul. They were generous, as the Puritans were virtuous. They had, like them, a heroism, but sympathetic, sociable, ready to proselytise, which reformed Europe, whilst the English one only served England.

VI.

This exaggerated Puritanism, which revolted Carlyle against the French Revolution, revolts him against modern England:

"We have forgotten God;—in the most modern dialect and very truth of the matter, we have taken up the Fact of this Universe as it is *not*. We have quietly closed our eyes to the

¹ *The French Revolution*, i. bk. vi. ch. i.; *Make the Constitution*.

eternal Substance of things, and opened them only to the Shows and Shams of things. We quietly believe this Universe to be intrinsically a great unintelligible *PERHAPS* ; extrinsically, clear enough, it is a great, most extensive Cattlefold and Workhouse, with most extensive Kitchen-ranges, Dining-tables,—whereat he is wise who can find a place ! All the Truth of this Universe is uncertain ; only the profit and loss of it, the pudding and praise of it, are and remain very visible to the practical man.

“There is no longer any God for us ! God’s Laws are become a Greatest-Happiness Principle, a Parliamentary Expediency ; the Heavens overarch us only as an Astronomical Time-keeper ; a butt for Herschel-telescopes to shoot science at, to shoot sentimentalities at : in our and old Jonson’s dialect, man has lost the *soul* out of him ; and now, after the due period,—begins to find the want of it ! This is verily the plague-spot ; centre of the universal Social Gangrene, threatening all modern things with frightful death. To him that will consider it, here is the stem, with its roots and taproot, with its world-wide upas-boughs and accursed poison-exudations, under which the world lies writhing in atrophy and agony. You touch the focal-centre of all our disease, of our frightful nosology of diseases, when you lay your hand on this. There is no religion : there is no God ; man has lost his soul, and vainly seeks antiseptic salt. Vainly : in killing Kings, in passing Reform bills, in French Revolutions, Manchester Insurrections, is found no remedy. The foul elephantine leprosy, alleviated for an hour, reappears in new force and desperateness next hour.”¹

Since the return of the Stuarts, we are utilitarians or sceptics. We believe only in observation, statistics, gross and concrete truths ; or else we doubt, half believe, on hearsay, with reserve. We have no moral convictions, and we have only floating convictions. We have lost the mainspring of action ; we no longer

¹ *Past and Present*, bk. iii. ch. i. ; *Phenomena*.

set duty in the midst of our resolve, as the sole and undisturbed foundation of life; we are caught by all kinds of little experimental and positive receipts, and we amuse ourselves with all kinds of pretty pleasures, well chosen and arranged. We are egotists or diletanti. We no longer look on life as an august temple, but as a machine for solid profits, or as a hall for refined amusements. We have our rich men, our manufacturers, our bankers, who preach the gospel of gold; we have gentlemen, dandies, lords, who preach the gospel of manners. We overwork ourselves to heap up guineas, or else we make ourselves insipid to attain an elegant dignity. Our hell is no longer, as under Cromwell, the dread of being found guilty before the just Judge, but the dread of making a bad speculation, or of transgressing etiquette. We have for our aristocracy greedy shopkeepers, who reduce life to a calculation of cost and sale-prices; and idle amateurs, whose great business in life is to preserve the game on their estates. We are no longer governed. Our government has no other ambition than to preserve the public peace, and to get in the taxes. Our constitution lays it down as a principle, that, in order to discover the true and the good, we have only to make two million imbeciles vote. Our Parliament is a great word-mill, where plotters out-bawl each other for the sake of making a noise.¹

¹ "It is his effort and desire to teach this and the other thinking British man that said finale, the advent namely of actual open Anarchy, cannot be distant, now when virtual disguised Anarchy, long-continued, and waxing daily, has got to such a height; and that the one method of staving off the fatal consummation, and steering towards the Continents of the Future, lies not in the direction of reforming Parliament, but of what he calls reforming Downing Street; a thing infinitely

Under this thin cloak of conventionalities and phrases, ominously growls the irresistible democracy. England perishes if she ever ceases to be able to sell a yard of cotton at a farthing less than others. At the least check in the manufactures, 1,500,000 workmen,¹ without work, live upon public charity. The formidable masses, given up to the hazards of industry, urged by lust, impelled by hunger, oscillates between the fragile cracking barriers; we are nearing the final breaking-up, which will be open anarchy, and the democracy will heave amidst the ruins, until the sentiment of the divine and of duty has rallied them around the worship of heroism; until it has discovered the means of calling to power the most virtuous and the most capable;² until it has given its guidance into their hands, instead of making them subject to its caprices; until it has recognised and revered its Luther and its Cromwell, its priest and its king.

urgent to be begun, and to be strenuously carried on. To find a Parliament more and more the express image of the People, could, unless the People chanced to be wise as well as miserable, give him no satisfaction. Not this at all; but to find some sort of *King*, made in the image of God, who could a little achieve for the People, if not their spoken wishes, yet their dumb wants, and what they would at last find to have been their instinctive *will*,—which is a far different matter usually, in this babbling world of ours.”—*Parliaments, in Latter-Day Pamphlets*.

“A king or leader, then, in all bodies of men, there must be; be their work what it may, there is one man here who by character, faculty, position, is fittest of all to do it.

“He who is to be my ruler, whose will is to be higher than my will, was chosen for me in Heaven. Neither, except in such obedience to the Heaven-chosen, is freedom so much as conceivable.”

¹ Official Report, 1842. ² *Latter-Day Pamphlets; Parliaments*.

VII.

Now-a-days, doubtless, in the whole civilised world, democracy is swelling or overflowing, and all the channels in which it flows, are fragile or temporary. But it is a strange offer to present for its issue the fanaticism and tyranny of the Puritans. The society and spirit which Carlyle proposes, as models for human nature, lasted but an hour, and could not last longer. The asceticism of the Republic produced the debauchery of the Restoration; Harrison preceded Rochester, men like Bunyan raised up men like Hobbes; and the sectaries, in instituting the despotism of enthusiasm, established by reaction the authority of the positive mind and the worship of gross pleasure. Exaltation is not stable, and it cannot be exacted from man, without injustice and danger. The sympathetic generosity of the French Revolution ended in the cynicism of the Directory and the slaughters of the empire. The chivalric and poetic piety of the great Spanish monarchy emptied Spain of men and of thought. The primacy of genius, taste, and intellect in Italy, reduced her at the end of a century to voluptuous sloth and political slavery. "What makes the angel makes the beast;" and perfect heroism, like all excesses, ends in stupor. Human nature has its explosions, but with intervals: mysticism is serviceable but when it is short. Violent circumstances produce extreme conditions; great evils are necessary in order to raise great men, and you are obliged to look for shipwrecks when you wish to behold rescuers. If enthusiasm is beautiful, its results and its originating circumstances are sad; it is but a crisis, and a healthy state is better,

In this respect Carlyle himself may serve for a proof. There is perhaps less genius in Macaulay than in Carlyle; but when we have fed for some time on this exaggerated and demoniacal style, this marvellous and sickly philosophy, this contorted and prophetic history, these sinister and furious politics, we gladly return to the continuous eloquence, to the vigorous reasoning, to the moderate prognostications, to the demonstrated theories, of the generous and solid mind which Europe has just lost, who brought honour to England, and whose place none can fill.

CHAPTER V.

Philosophy.—Stuart Mill.¹

I.

WHEN at Oxford some years ago, during the meeting of the British Association, I met, amongst the few students still in residence, a young Englishman, a man of intelligence, with whom I became intimate. He took me in the evening to the New Museum, well filled with specimens. Here short lectures were delivered, new models of machinery were set to work; ladies were present and took an interest in the experiments; on the last day, full of enthusiasm, *God save*

¹ M. Taine has published this "Study on Mill" separately, and preceded it by the following note, as a preface:—"When this Study first appeared, Mr. Mill did me the honour to write to me that it would not be possible to give in a few pages a more exact and complete notion of the contents of his work, considered as a body of philosophical teaching, 'But,' he added, 'I think you are wrong in regarding the views I adopt as especially English. They were so in the first half of the eighteenth century, from the time of Locke to that of the reaction against Hume. This reaction, beginning in Scotland, assumed long ago the German form, and ended by prevailing universally. When I wrote my book, I stood almost alone in my opinions; and though they have met with a degree of sympathy which I by no means expected, we may still count in England twenty *a priori* and spiritualist philosophers for every partisan of the doctrine of Experience.'

"This remark is very true. I myself could have made it, having been brought up in the doctrines of Scottish philosophy and the writings of Reid. I simply answer, that there are philosophers whom we do not count, and that all such, whether English or not, spiritualist or not,

the Queen was sung. I admired this zeal, this solidity of mind, this organisation of science, these voluntary subscriptions, this aptitude for association and for labour, this great machine pushed on by so many arms, and so well fitted to accumulate, criticise, and classify facts. But yet, in this abundance, there was a void; when I read the Transactions, I thought I was present at a congress of heads of manufactories. All these learned men verified details and exchanged recipes. It was as though I listened to foremen, busy in communicating their processes for tanning leather or dyeing cotton: general ideas were wanting. I used to regret this to my friend; and in the evening, by his lamp, amidst that great silence in which the university town lay wrapped, we both tried to discover its reasons.

II.

One day I said to him: You lack philosophy—I mean, what the Germans call metaphysics. You have

may be neglected without much harm. Once in a half century, or perhaps in a century, or two centuries, some thinker appears; Bacon and Hume in England, Descartes and Condillac in France, Kant and Hegel in Germany. At other times the stage is unoccupied, or ordinary men come forward, and offer the public that which the public likes—Sensualists or Idealists, according to the tendency of the day, with sufficient instruction and skill to play leading parts, and enough capacity to re-set old airs, well drilled in the works of their predecessors, but destitute of real invention—simple executant musicians, who stand in the place of composers. In Europe, at present, the stage is a blank. The Germans adapt and alter effete French materialism. The French listen from habit, but somewhat wearily and distractedly, to the scraps of melody and eloquent commonplace which their instructors have repeated to them for the last thirty years. In this deep silence, and from among these dull mediocrities, a master comes forward to speak. Nothing of the sort has been seen since Hegel."

learned men, but you have no thinkers. Your God impedes you. He is the Supreme Cause, and you dare not reason on causes, out of respect for him. He is the most important personage in England, and I see clearly that he merits his position; for he forms part of your constitution, he is the guardian of your morality, he judges in final appeal on all questions whatsoever, he replaces with advantage the prefects and gendarmes with whom the nations on the Continent are still enumbered. Yet, this high rank has the inconvenience of all official positions; it produces a cant, prejudices, intolerance, and courtiers. Here, close by us, is poor Mr. Max Müller, who, in order to acclimatise the study of Sanscrit, was compelled to discover in the Vedas the worship of a moral God, that is to say, the religion of Paley and Addison. Some time ago, in London, I read a proclamation of the Queen, forbidding people to play cards, even in their own houses, on Sundays.¹ It seems that, if I were robbed, I could not bring my thief to justice without taking a preliminary religious oath; for the judge has been known to send a complainant away who refused to take the oath, deny him justice, and insult him into the bargain. Every year when we read the Queen's speech in your papers, we find there the compulsory mention of Divine Providence, which comes in mechanically, like the invocation to the immortal gods on the fourth page of a rhetorical declamation; and you remember that once, the pious phrase having been omitted, a second communication was made to Parliament for the express purpose of supplying it. All these cavillings and pedantries indicate to my mind a celestial monarchy; naturally it resembles all

¹ This law has been abrogated by an Act of Parliament. —Tt.

others ; I mean that it relies more willingly on tradition and custom than on examination and reason. A monarchy never invited men to verify its credentials. As yours is, however, useful, well adapted to you, and moral, you are not revolted by it ; you submit to it without difficulty, you are, at heart, attached to it ; you would fear, in touching it, to disturb the constitution and morality. You leave it in the clouds, amidst public homage. You fall back upon yourselves, confine yourselves to matters of fact, to minute dissections, to experiments in the laboratory. You go culling plants and collecting shells. Science is deprived of its head ; but all is for the best, for practical life is improved, and dogma remains intact.

III.

You are truly French, he answered ; you ignore facts, and all at once find yourself settled in a theory. I assure you that there are thinkers amongst us, and not far from hence, at Christ Church, for instance. One of them, the professor of Greek, has spoken so deeply on inspiration, the creation and final causes, that he is out of favour. Look at this little collection which has recently appeared, *Essays and Reviews* ; your philosophic freedom of the last century, the latest conclusions of geology and cosmogony, the boldness of German exegesis, are here in abstract. Some things are wanting, amongst others the waggeries of Voltaire, the misty jargon of Germany, and the prosaic coarseness of Comte ; to my mind, the loss is small. Wait twenty years, and you will find in London the ideas of Paris and Berlin.—But they will still be the ideas of Paris and Berlin.

Whom have you that is original?—Stuart Mill.—Who is he?—A political writer. His little book *On Liberty* is as admirable as Rousseau's *Contrat Social* is bad.—That is a bold assertion.—No, for Mill decides as strongly for the independence of the individual as Rousseau for the despotism of the State.—Very well, but that is not enough to make a philosopher. What besides is he?—An economist who goes beyond his science, and subordinates production to man, instead of man to production.—Well, but this is not enough to make a philosopher. Is he anything else?—A logician. Very good; but of what school?—Of his own. I told you he was original.—Is he Hegelian?—By no means; he is too fond of facts and proofs.—Does he follow Port-Royal?—Still less; he is too well acquainted with modern sciences.—Does he imitate Condillac?—Certainly not; Condillac has only taught him to write well.—Who, then, are his friends?—Locke and Comte in the first rank; then Hume and Newton.—Is he a system-monger, a speculative reformer?—He has too much sense for that; he only arranges the best theories, and explains the best methods. He does not attitudinise majestically in the character of a restorer of science; he does not declare, like your Germans, that his book will open up a new era for humanity. He proceeds gradually, somewhat slowly, often creepingly, through a multitude of particular facts. He excels in giving precision to an idea, in disentangling a principle, in discovering it amongst a number of different facts; in refuting, distinguishing, arguing. He has the astuteness, patience, method, and sagacity of a lawyer.—Very well, you admit that I was right. A lawyer, an ally of Locke, Newton, Comte, and Hume; we have here

only English philosophy; but no matter. Has he reached a grand conception of the universe?—Yes.—Has he an individual and complete idea of nature and the mind?—Yes.—Has he combined the operations and discoveries of the intellect under a single principle which puts them all in a new light?—Yes; but we have to discover this principle.—That is your business, and I hope you will undertake it.—But I shall fall into abstract generalities.—There is no harm in that?—But this close reasoning will be like a quick-set hedge. We will prick our fingers with it.—But three men out of four would cast aside such speculations as idle.—So much the worse for them. For in what does the life of a nation or a century consist, except in the formation of such theories? We are not thoroughly men unless so engaged. If some dweller in another planet were to come down here to ask us the nature of our race, we should have to show him the five or six great ideas which we have formed of the mind and the world. That alone would give him the measure of our intelligence. Expound to me your theory, and I shall go away better instructed than after having seen the masses of brick, which you call London and Manchester.

§ 1.—EXPERIENCE.

I.

Let us begin, then, at the beginning, like logicians. Mill has written on logic. What is logic? It is a science. What is its object? The sciences; for, suppose that you have traversed the universe, and that you know it thoroughly, stars, earth, sun, heat, gravity, chemical affinities, the species of minerals, geological

revolutions, plants, animals, human events, all that classifications and theories explain and embrace, there still remain these classifications and theories to be learnt. Not only is there an order of beings, but also an order of the thoughts which represent them; not only plants and animals, but also botany and zoology; not only lines, surfaces, volumes, and numbers, but also geometry and arithmetic. Sciences, then, are as real things as facts themselves, and therefore, as well as facts, become the subject of study. We can analyse them as we analyse facts, investigate their elements, composition, order, relations, and object. There is, therefore, a science of sciences; this science is called logic, and is the subject of Mill's work. It is no part of logic to analyse the operations of the mind, memory, the association of ideas, external perception, etc.; that is the business of psychology. We do not discuss the value of such operations, the veracity of our consciousness, the absolute certainty of our elementary knowledge; this belongs to metaphysics. We suppose our faculties to be at work, and we admit their primary discoveries. We take the instrument as nature has provided it, and we trust to its accuracy. We leave to others the task of taking its mechanism to pieces, and the curiosity which criticises its results. Setting out from its primitive operations, we inquire how they are added to each other; how they are combined; how one is convertible into another; how, by dint of additions, combinations, and transformations, they finally compose a system of connected and developed truths. We construct a theory of science, as others construct theories of vegetation, of the mind, or of numbers. Such is the idea of logic; and it is plain that it has, as other sciences, a real

subject-matter, its distinct province, its manifest importance, its special method, and a certain future.

II.

Having premised so much, we observe that all these sciences which form the subject of logic, are but collections of propositions, and that each proposition merely connects or separates a subject and an attribute, that is, two names, a quality and a substance; that is to say, a thing and another thing. We must then ask what we understand by a thing, what we indicate by a name; in other words, what it is we recognise in objects, what we connect or separate, what is the subject-matter of all our propositions and all our science. There is a point in which all our several items of knowledge resemble one another. There is a common element which, continually repeated, constitutes all our ideas. There is, as it were, a minute primitive crystal which, indefinitely and variously repeating itself, forms the whole mass, and which, once known, teaches us beforehand the laws and composition of the complex bodies which it has formed.

Now, when we attentively consider the idea which we form of anything, what do we find in it? Take first substances, that is to say, Bodies and Minds.¹ This

¹ "It is certain, then, that a part of our notion of a body consists of the notion of a number of sensations of our own or of other sentient beings, habitually occurring simultaneously. My conception of the table at which I am writing is compounded of its visible form and size, which are complex sensations of sight; its tangible form and size, which are complex sensations of our organs of touch and of our muscles; its weight, which is also a sensation of touch and of the muscles; its colour, which is a sensation of sight; its hardness, which is a sensation of the muscles; its composition, which is another word

table is brown, long, wide, three feet high, judging by the eye: that is, it forms a little spot in the field of vision; in other words, it produces a certain sensation on the optic nerve. It weighs ten pounds: that is, it would require to lift it an effort less than for a weight of eleven pounds, and greater than for a weight of nine pounds; in other words, it produces a certain muscular sensation. It is hard and square, which means that, if first pushed, and then run over by the hand, it will excite two distinct kinds of muscular sensations. And so on. When I examine closely what I know of it, I find that I know nothing else except the impressions it makes upon me. Our idea of a body comprises nothing else than this: we know nothing of it but the sensations it excites in us; we determine it by the nature, number, and order of these sensations; we know nothing of its inner nature, nor whether it has one; we simply affirm that it is the unknown cause of these sensations. When we say that a body has existed in the absence of our sensations we mean simply that if, during that time, we had been within reach of it, we should have had sensations which we have not had. We never define it save by our present or past, future or possible, complex or simple impressions. This is so true, that philosophers like Berkeley have maintained, with some

for all the varieties of sensation which we receive, under various circumstances, from the wood of which it is made; and so forth. All or most of these various sensations frequently are, and, as we learn by experience, always might be, experienced simultaneously, or in many different orders of succession, at our own choice: and hence the thought of any one of them makes us think of the others, and the whole becomes mentally amalgamated into one mixed state of consciousness, which, in the language of Locke and Hartley, is termed a Complex Idea."—*MILL'S System of Logic*, 4th ed. 2 vols., i. 62.

show of truth, that matter is a creature of the imagination, and that the whole universe of sense, is reducible to an order of sensations. It is at least so, as far as our knowledge is concerned ; and the judgments which compose our sciences, have reference only to the impressions by which things are manifested to us.

So, again, with the mind. We may well admit that there is in us a soul, an "ego," a subject or recipient of our sensations, and of our other modes of being, distinct from those sensations and modes of existence ; but we know nothing of it. Mr. Mill says :

"For, as our conception of a body is that of an unknown exciting cause of sensations, so our conception of a mind is that of an unknown recipient, or percipient, of them ; and not of them alone, but of all our other feelings. As body is the mysterious something which excites the mind to feel, so mind is the mysterious something which feels, and thinks. It is unnecessary to give in the case of mind, as we gave in the case of matter, a particular statement of the sceptical system by which its existence as a Thing in itself, distinct from the series of what are denominated its states, is called in question. But it is necessary to remark, that on the inmost nature of the thinking principle, as well as on the inmost nature of matter, we are, and with our faculties must always remain, entirely in the dark. All which we are aware of, even in our own minds, is a certain 'thread of consciousness ;' a series of feelings, that is, of sensations, thoughts, emotions, and volitions, more or less numerous and complicated." ¹

We have no clearer idea of mind than of matter ; we can say nothing more about it than about matter. So that substances, of whatever kind, bodies or minds, within or without us, are never for us more than tissues,

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 68.

more or less complex, more or less regular, of which our impressions and modes of being form all the threads.

This is still more evident in the case of attributes than of substances. When I say that snow is white, I mean that, when snow is presented to my sight, I have the sensation of whiteness. When I say that fire is hot, I mean that, when near the fire, I have the sensation of heat. We call a mind devout, superstitious, meditative, or gay, simply meaning that the ideas, the emotions, the volitions, designated by these words, recur frequently in the series of its modes of being.¹ When we say that bodies are heavy, divisible, movable, we mean simply that, left to themselves, they will fall; when cut, they

¹ "Every attribute of a mind consists either in being itself affected in a certain way, or affecting other minds in a certain way. Considered in itself, we can predicate nothing of it but the series of its own feelings. When we say of any mind, that it is devout, or superstitious, or meditative, or cheerful, we mean that the ideas, emotions, or volitions implied in those words, form a frequently recurring part of the series of feelings, or states of consciousness, which fill up the sentient existence of that mind.

"In addition, however, to those attributes of a mind which are grounded on its own states of feeling, attributes may also be ascribed to it, in the same manner as to a body, grounded on the feelings which it excites in other minds. A mind does not, indeed, like a body, excite sensations, but it may excite thoughts or emotions. The most important example of attributes ascribed on this ground, is the employment of terms expressive of approbation or blame. When, for example, we say of any character, or (in other words) of any mind, that it is admirable, we mean that the contemplation of it excites the sentiment of admiration; and indeed somewhat more, for the word implies that we not only feel admiration, but approve that sentiment in ourselves. In some cases, under the semblance of a single attribute, two are really predicated: one of them, a state of the mind itself; the other, a state with which other minds are affected by thinking of it. As when we say of any one that he is generous. The word generosity expresses a certain state of mind, but being a term of praise, it also expresses that this state of mind excites in us another mental state, called approbation.

will separate; or when pushed, they will move: that is, under such and such circumstances they will produce such and such a sensation in our muscles, or our sight. An attribute always designates a mode of our being, or a series of our modes of being. In vain we disguise these modes by grouping, concealing them under abstract words, dividing and transforming them, so that we are frequently puzzled to recognise them: whenever we pierce to the basis of our words and ideas, we find them and nothing but them. Mill says:

"Take the following example: A generous person is worthy of honour. Who would expect to recognise here a case of co-existence between phenomena? But so it is. The attribute which causes a person to be termed generous is ascribed to him on the ground of states of his mind, and particulars of his conduct; both are phenomena; the former are facts of internal consciousness, the latter, so far as distinct from the former, are physical facts, or perceptions of the senses. Worthy of honour, admits of a similar analysis. Honour, as here used, means a state of approving and admiring emotion, followed on occasion by corresponding outward acts. 'Worthy of honour' connotes all this, together with an approval of the act of showing honour. All these are phenomena; states of internal consciousness, accompanied or followed by physical facts. When we say, A generous person is worthy of honour, we affirm coexistence between the two complicated phenomena connoted by the two terms respectively. We affirm, that wherever and whenever the inward feelings and outward facts implied in the word generosity, have place, then and there the existence and manifestation of an inward feeling, honour, would be followed in our minds by another inward feeling, approval."¹

The assertion made, therefore, is twofold, and of the following purport: Certain feelings form habitually a part of this person's sentient existence; and the idea of those feelings of his, excites the sentiment of approbation in ourselves or others."—*Mill's Logic*, i. 80. ¹ *Ibid.* 110.

When we turn about as we please, we remain still in the same circle. Whether the object be an attribute or substance, complex or abstract, compound or simple, material is to us always the same; it is made up of our modes of being. Our mind is to nature as a thermometer is to a boiler: we define the process of nature by the impressions of our mind, as we state the conditions of the boiling water by the degrees of the thermometer. Of both we know but of variation and changes; both are made up of isolated transient facts; a thing is for us but an aggregate of phenomena. These are the sole elements of our knowledge: consequently the whole effort of science will be to link facts to facts.

III.

This brief phrase is the abstract of the whole system. It is master of it, for it explains all Mill's theories. He has defined and restated everything from this starting-point. In all forms and all degrees of knowledge, he has recognised only the knowledge of facts, and of their relations.

Now we know that logic has two corner-stones, the theories of Definition and of Proof. From the days of Aristotle logicians have spent their time in polishing them. They have only dared to touch them respectfully, as if they were sacred. At most, from time to time, an innovator ventured to turn them over cautiously, to put them in a better light. Mill shapes, cuts, turns them over, and replaces them both in a similar manner by the same means.

IV.

I am quite aware that now-a-days men laugh at those who reason on definitions; the laughers deserve to be laughed at. There is no theory more fertile in universal and important results; it is the root by which the whole tree of human science grows and lives. For to define things is to mark out their nature. To introduce a new idea of definition is to introduce a new idea of the nature of things; it is to tell us what beings are, of what they are composed, into what elements they are capable of being resolved. In this lies the merit of these dry speculations; the philosopher seems occupied with arranging mere formulas; the fact is that in them he encloses the universe.

Take, say logicians, an animal, a plant, a feeling, a geometrical figure, an object or group of objects of any kind. Doubtless the object has its properties, but it has also its essence. It is manifested to the outer world by an indefinite number of effects and qualities; but all these modes of being are the results or products of its inner nature. There is within it a certain hidden substratum which alone is primitive and important, without which it can neither exist nor be conceived, and which constitutes its being and our notion of it.¹ They call the propositions which denote this essence definitions, and assert that the best part of our knowledge consists of such propositions.

¹ According to idealist logicians, this being is arrived at by examining our notion of it; and the idea, on analysis, reveals the essence. According to the classifying school, we arrive at the being by placing the object in its group, and the notion is defined by stating the genus and the difference. Both agree in believing that we are capable of grasping the essence.

On the other hand, Mill says that these kinds of propositions teach us nothing; they show the mere sense of a word, and are purely verbal.¹ What do I learn by being told that man is a rational animal, or that a triangle is a space contained by three lines? The first part of such a phrase expresses by an abbreviative word what the second part expresses in a developed phrase. You tell me the same thing twice over; you put the same fact into two different expressions; you do not add one fact to another, but you go from one fact to its equivalent. Your proposition is not instructive. You might collect a million such, my mind would remain entirely void; I should have read a dictionary, but not have acquired a single piece of knowledge. Instead of saying that essential propositions are important, and those relating to qualities merely accessory, you ought to say that the first are accessory, and the second important. I learn nothing by being told that a circle is a figure formed by the revolution of a straight line about one of its points as centre; I do learn something when told that the chords which subtend equal arcs in the circle are themselves equal, or that three given points determine the circumference. What we call the nature of a being is the connected system of facts which constitutes that being. The nature of a carnivorous mammal consists

¹ "An essential proposition, then, is one which is purely verbal; which asserts of a thing under a particular name, only what is asserted of it in the fact of calling it by that name; and which therefore either gives no information, or gives it respecting the name, not the thing. Non-essential or accidental propositions, on the contrary, may be called Real Propositions, in opposition to Verbal. They predicate of a thing, some fact not involved in the signification of the name by which the proposition speaks of it; some attribute not connoted by that name."
—*MILL'S Logic*, i. 127.

in the fact that the property of giving milk, and all its implied peculiarities of structure, are combined with the possession of sharp teeth, instincts of prey, and the corresponding faculties. Such are the elements which compose its nature. They are facts linked together as mesh to mesh in a net. We perceive a few of them ; and we know that beyond our present knowledge and our future experience, the network extends to infinity its interwoven and manifold threads. The essence or nature of a being is the indefinite sum of its properties. Mill says :

“ The definition, they say, unfolds the nature of the thing : but no definition can unfold its whole nature ; and every proposition in which any quality whatever is predicated of the thing, unfolds some part of its nature. The true state of the case we take to be this. All definitions are of names, and of names only ; but in some definitions it is clearly apparent, that nothing is intended except to explain the meaning of the word ; while in others, besides explaining the meaning of the word, it is intended to be implied that there exists a thing, corresponding to the word.”¹

Abandon, then, the vain hope of eliminating from properties some primitive and mysterious being, the source and abstract of the whole ; leave entities to Duns Scotus ; do not fancy that, by probing your ideas in the German fashion, by classifying objects according to genera and species like the schoolmen, by reviving the nominalism of the Middle Ages or the riddles of Hegelian metaphysics, you will ever supply the want of experience. There are no definitions of things ; if there are definitions, they only define names. No phrase can tell me what a horse is ; but there are phrases which will in-

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 162.

form me what is meant by these five letters. No phrase can exhaust the inexhaustible sum of qualities which make up a being; but several phrases may point out the facts corresponding to a word. In this case definition is possible, because we can always make an analysis, which will enable us to pass from the abstract and summary term to the attributes which it represents, and from these attributes to the inner or concrete feelings which constitute their foundation. From the term "dog" it enables us to rise to the attributes "mammiferous," "carnivorous," and others which it represents; and from these attributes to the sensations of sight, of touch, of the dissecting knife, on which they are founded. It reduces the compound to the simple, the derived to the primitive. It brings back our knowledge to its origin. It transforms words into facts. If some definitions, such as those of geometry, seem capable of giving rise to long sequences of new truths,¹ it is because, in addition to the explanation of a word, they contain the affirmation of a thing. In the definition of a triangle there are two distinct propositions,—the one stating that "there may exist a figure bounded by three straight lines;" the other, that "such a figure may be termed a triangle." The first is a postulate, the second a definition. The first is hidden, the second evident; the first

¹ "The definition above given of a triangle obviously comprises not one, but two propositions, perfectly distinguishable. The one is, 'There may exist a figure bounded by three straight lines;' the other, 'And this figure may be termed a triangle.' The former of these propositions is not a definition at all; the latter is a mere nominal definition, or explanation of the use and application of a term. The first is susceptible of truth or falsehood, and may therefore be made the foundation of a train of reasoning. The latter can neither be true nor false; the only character it is susceptible of is that of conformity to the ordinary usage of language."—MILL'S *Logic*, I. 162.

may be true or false, the second can be neither. The first is the source of all possible theorems as to triangles, the second only resumes in a word the facts contained in the other. The first is a truth, the second is a convention; the first is a part of science, the second an expedient of language. The first expresses a possible relation between three straight lines, the second gives a name to this relation. The first alone is fruitful, because it alone conforms to the nature of every fruitful proposition, and connects two facts. Let us, then, understand exactly the nature of our knowledge: it relates either to words or to things, or to both at once. If it is a matter of words, as in the definition of names, it attempts to refer words to our primitive feelings, that is to say, to the facts which form their elements. If it relates to beings, as in propositions about things, its whole effort is to link fact to fact, in order to connect the finite number of known properties with the infinite number to be known. If both are involved, as in the definitions of names which conceal a proposition relating to things, it attempts to do both. Everywhere its operation is the same. The whole matter in any case is to understand each other,—that is, to revert to facts, or to learn,—that is, to add facts to facts.

V.

The first rampart is destroyed; our adversaries take refuge behind the second—the Theory of Proof. This theory has passed for two thousand years for a substantiated, definite, unassailable truth. Many have deemed it useless, but no one has dared to call it false. On all sides it has been considered as an established

theorem. Let us examine it closely and attentively. What is a proof? According to logicians, it is a syllogism. And what is a syllogism? A group of three propositions of this kind: "All men are mortal; Prince Albert is a man; therefore Prince Albert is mortal." Here we have the type of a proof, and every complete proof is conformable to this type. Now what is there according to logicians, in this proof? A general proposition concerning all men, which gives rise to a particular proposition concerning a certain man. From the first we pass to the second, because the second is contained in the first; from the general to the particular, because the particular is comprised in the general. The second is but an instance of the first; its truth is contained beforehand in that of the first, and this is why it is a truth. In fact, as soon as the conclusion is no longer contained in the premisses, the reasoning is false, and all the complicated rules of the Middle Ages have been reduced by the Port-Royalists to this single rule, "The conclusion must be contained in the premisses." Thus the entire process of the human mind in its reasonings consists in recognising in individuals what is known of a whole class; in affirming in detail what has been established for the aggregate; in laying down a second time, and piecemeal, what has been laid down once for all at first.

By no means, replies Mill; for if it were so, our reasoning would be good for nothing. It would not be a progress, but a repetition. When I have affirmed that all men are mortal, I have affirmed implicitly that Prince Albert is mortal. In speaking of the whole class, that is to say, of all the individuals of the class, I have spoken of each individual, and therefore of Prince

Albert, who is one of them. I say nothing new, then, when I now mention him expressly. My conclusion teaches me nothing; it adds nothing to my positive knowledge; it only puts in another shape a knowledge which I already possessed. It is not fruitful, but purely verbal. If, then, reasoning be what logicians represent it, it is not instructive. I know as much of the subject at the beginning of my reasoning as at the end. I have transformed words into other words; I have been moving without gaining ground. Now this cannot be the case; for, in fact, reasoning does teach us new truths. I learn a new truth when I discover that Prince Albert is mortal, and I discover it by dint of reasoning; for, since he is still alive, I cannot have learnt it by direct observation. Thus logicians are mistaken; and beyond the scholastic theory of syllogism, which reduces reasoning to substitutions of words, we must look for a positive theory of proof, which shall explain how it is that, by the process of reasoning, we discover facts.

For this purpose, it is sufficient to observe, that general propositions are not the true proof of particular propositions. They seem so, but are not. It is not from the mortality of all men that I conclude Prince Albert to be mortal; the premisses are elsewhere, and in the background. The general proposition is but a memento, a sort of abbreviative register, to which I have consigned the fruit of my experience. This memento may be regarded as a notebook to which we refer to refresh our memory; but it is not from the book that we draw our knowledge, but from the objects which we have seen. My memento is valuable only for the facts which it recalls. My general proposition

has no value except for the particular facts which it sums up.

“The mortality of John, Thomas, and company is, after all, the whole evidence we have for the mortality of the Duke of Wellington. Not one iota is added to the proof by interpolating a general proposition. Since the individual cases are all the evidence we can possess, evidence which no logical form into which we choose to throw it can make greater than it is; and since that evidence is either sufficient in itself, or, if insufficient for the one purpose, cannot be sufficient for the other; I am unable to see why we should be forbidden to take the shortest cut from these sufficient premisses to the conclusion, and constrained to travel the ‘high priori road’ by the arbitrary fiat of logicians.”¹

“The true reason which makes us believe that Prince Albert will die is, that his ancestors, and our ancestors, and all the other persons who were their contemporaries, are dead. These facts are the true premisses of our reasoning.” It is from them that we have drawn the general proposition; they have taught us its scope and truth; it confines itself to mentioning them in a shorter form; it receives its whole substance from them; they act by it and through it, to lead us to the conclusion to which it seems to give rise. It is only their representative, and on occasion they do without it. Children, ignorant people, animals know that the sun will rise, that water will drown them, that fire will burn them, without employing this general proposition. They reason, and we reason, too, not from the general to the particular, but from particular to particular:

“All inference is from particulars to particulars; General propositions are merely registers of such inferences already made,

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 211.

and short formulæ for making more : The major premiss of a syllogism, consequently, is a formula of this description : and the conclusion is not an inference drawn *from* the formula, but an inference drawn *according* to the formula : the real logical antecedent, or premisses, being the particular facts from which the general proposition was collected by induction. Those facts, and the individual instances which supplied them, may have been forgotten ; but a record remains, not indeed descriptive of the facts themselves, but showing how those cases may be distinguished respecting which the facts, when known, were considered to warrant a given inference. According to the indications of this record we draw our conclusion ; which is to all intents and purposes, a conclusion from the forgotten facts. For this it is essential that we should read the record correctly : and the rules of the syllogism are a set of precautions to ensure our doing so.”¹

“ If we had sufficiently capacious memories, and a sufficient power of maintaining order among a huge mass of details, the reasoning could go on without any general propositions ; they are mere formulæ for inferring particulars from particulars.”²

Here, as before, logicians are mistaken : they gave the highest place to verbal operations, and left the really fruitful operations in the background. They gave the preference to words over facts. They perpetuated the nominalism of the Middle Ages. They mistook the explanation of names for the nature of things, and the transformation of ideas for the progress of the mind. It is for us to overturn this order in logic, as we have overturned it in science, to exalt particular and instructive facts, and to give them in our theories that superiority and importance which our practice has conferred upon them for three centuries past.

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 218.

² *Ibid.* i. 240.

VI.

There remains a kind of philosophical fortress in which the Idealists have taken refuge. At the origin of all proof are Axioms, from which all proofs are derived. Two straight lines cannot enclose a space; two things, equal to a third, are equal to one another; if equals be added to equals, the wholes are equal. These are instructive propositions, for they express, not the meanings of words, but the relations of things. And, moreover, they are fertile propositions; for arithmetic, algebra, and geometry are all the result of their truth. On the other hand, they are not the work of experience, for we need not actually see with our eyes two straight lines in order to know that they cannot enclose a space; it is enough for us to refer to the inner mental conception which we have of them: the evidence of our senses is not needed for this purpose; our belief arises wholly, with its full force, from the simple comparison of our ideas. Moreover, experience follows these two lines only to a limited distance, ten, a hundred, a thousand feet; and the axiom is true for a thousand, a hundred thousand, a million miles, and for an unlimited distance. Thus, beyond the point at which experience ceases, it is no longer experience which establishes the axiom. Finally, the axiom is a necessary truth; that is to say, the contrary is inconceivable. We cannot imagine a space enclosed by two straight lines: as soon as we imagine the space enclosed, the two lines cease to be straight; and as soon as we imagine the two lines to be straight, the space ceases to be enclosed. In the assertion of axioms, the constituent ideas are irresistibly drawn together. In

the negation of axioms, the constituent ideas inevitably repel each other. Now this does not happen with truths of experience: they state an accidental relation, not a necessary connection; they lay down that two facts are connected, and not that they must be connected; they show us that bodies are heavy, not that they must be heavy. Thus, axioms are not, and cannot be the results of experience. They are not so, because we can form them mentally without the aid of experience; they cannot be so, because the nature and scope of their truths lie beyond the limits of experience. They have another and a deeper source. They have a wider scope, and they come from elsewhere.

Not so, answers Mill. Here again you reason like a schoolman; you forget the facts concealed behind your conceptions; for examine your first argument. Doubtless you can discover, without making use of your eyes, and by purely mental contemplation, that two straight lines cannot enclose a space; but this contemplation is but a displaced experiment. Imaginary lines here replace real lines: you construct the figure in your mind instead of on paper: your imagination fulfils the office of a diagram on paper: you trust to it as you trust to the diagram, and it is as good as the other; for in regard to figures and lines the imagination exactly reproduces the sensation. What you have seen with your eyes open, you will see again exactly the same a minute afterwards with your eyes closed; and you can study geometrical properties transferred to the field of mental vision, as accurately as if they existed in the field of actual sight. There are, therefore, experiments of the brain as there are

ocular ones ; and it is after just such an experiment that you deny to two straight lines, indefinitely prolonged, the property of enclosing a space. You need not for this purpose pursue them to infinity, you need only transfer yourself in imagination to the point where they converge, and there you have the impression of a bent line, that is of one which ceases to be straight.¹ Your presence there in imagination takes the place of an actual presence ; you can affirm by it what you affirmed by your actual presence, and as positively. The first is only the second in a more commodious form, with greater flexibility and scope. It is like using a telescope instead of the naked eye ; the revelations of the telescope are propositions of experience ; so are those of the imagination. As to the argument which distinguishes axioms from propositions of experience under the pretext that the contraries of the latter are conceivable, while the contraries of axioms are inconceivable, it is nugatory, for this distinction does not exist. Nothing prevents the contraries of certain propositions of experience from being conceivable, and

¹ "For though, in order actually to see that two given lines never meet, it would be necessary to follow them to infinity ; yet without doing so we may know that if they ever do meet, or if, after diverging from one another, they begin again to approach, this must take place not at an infinite, but at a finite distance. Supposing, therefore, such to be the case, we can transport ourselves thither in imagination, and can frame a mental image of the appearance which one or both of the lines must present at that point, which we may rely on as being precisely similar to the reality. Now, whether we fix our contemplation upon this imaginary picture, or call to mind the generalisations we have had occasion to make from former ocular observation, we learn by the evidence of experience, that a line which, after diverging from another straight line, begins to approach to it, produces the impression on our senses which we describe by the expression 'a bent line,' not by the expression 'a straight line.'"—MILL's *Logic*, i. 364.

the contraries of others inconceivable. That depends on the constitution of our minds. It may be that in some cases the mind may contradict its experience, and in others not. It is possible that in certain cases our conceptions may differ from our perceptions, and sometimes not. It may be that, in certain cases, external sight is opposed to internal, and in certain others not. Now, we have already seen that in the case of figures, the internal sight exactly reproduces the external. Therefore, in axioms of figures, the mental sight cannot be opposed to the actual; imagination cannot contradict sensation. In other words, the contraries of such axioms will be inconceivable. Thus axioms, although their contraries are inconceivable, are experiments of a certain class, and it is because they are so that their contraries are inconceivable. At every point there results this conclusion, which is the abstract of the system: every instructive or fruitful proposition is derived from experience, and is simply a connecting together of facts.

VII.

Hence it follows that Induction is the only key to nature. This theory is Mill's masterpiece. Only so thorough-going a partisan of experience could have constructed the theory of Induction.

What, then, is Induction?

"Induction is that operation of the mind by which we infer that what we know to be true in a particular case or cases, will be true in all cases which resemble the former in certain assignable respects. In other words, Induction is the process by which we conclude that what is true of certain individuals

of a class is true of the whole class, or that what is true at certain times will be true in similar circumstances at all times."¹

This is the reasoning by which, having observed that Peter, John, and a greater or less number of men have died, we conclude that all men will die. In short, induction connects "mortality" with the quality of "man;" that is to say, connects two general facts ordinarily successive, and asserts that the first is the Cause of the second.

This amounts to saying that the course of nature is uniform. But induction does not set out from this axiom, it leads up to it; we do not find it at the beginning, but at the end of our researches.² Fundamentally, experience presupposes nothing beyond itself. No *a priori* principle comes to authorise or guide her. We observe that this stone has fallen, that this hot coal has burnt us, that this man has died, and we have no other means of induction except the addition and comparison of these little isolated and transient facts. We learn by simple practical experience that the sun gives light, that bodies fall, that water quenches thirst,

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 315.

² "We must first observe, that there is a principle implied in the very statement of what Induction is; an assumption with regard to the course of nature and the order of the universe: namely, that there are such things in nature as parallel cases; that what happens once, will, under a sufficient degree of similarity of circumstances, happen again, and not only again, but as often as the same circumstances recur. This, I say, is an assumption, involved in every case of induction. And, if we consult the actual course of nature, we find that the assumption is warranted. The universe, so far as known to us, is so constituted, that whatever is true in any one case, is true in all cases of a certain description; the only difficulty is, to find *what* description." —MILL'S *Logic*, i. 337.

and we have no other means of extending or criticising these inductions than by other like inductions. Every observation and every induction draws its value from itself, and from similar ones. It is always experience which judges of experience, and induction of induction. The body of our truths has not, then, a soul distinct from it, and vivifying it; it subsists by the harmony of all its parts taken as a whole, and by the vitality of each part taken separately.

“Why is it that, with exactly the same amount of evidence, both negative and positive, we did not reject the assertion that there are black swans, while we should refuse credence to any testimony which asserted that there were men wearing their heads underneath their shoulders? The first assertion was more credible than the latter. But why more credible? So long as neither phenomenon had been actually witnessed, what reason was there for finding the one harder to be believed than the other? Apparently because there is less constancy in the colours of animals, than in the general structure of their internal anatomy. But how do we know this? Doubtless from experience. It appears, then, that we need experience to inform us in what degree, and in what cases, or sorts of cases, experience is to be relied on. Experience must be consulted in order to learn from it under what circumstances arguments from it will be valid. We have no ulterior test to which we subject experience in general; but we make experience its own test. Experience testifies, that among the uniformities which it exhibits, or seems to exhibit, some are more to be relied on than others; and uniformity, therefore, may be presumed, from any given number of instances, with a greater degree of assurance, in proportion as the case belongs to a class in which the uniformities have hitherto been found more uniform.”¹

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 351.

Experience is the only test, and it is to be found everywhere.

Let us then consider how, without any help but that of experience, we can form general propositions, especially the most numerous and important of all, those which connect two successive events, by saying that the first is the cause of the second.

Cause is a great word; let us examine it. It carries in itself a whole philosophy. From the idea we have of Cause depend all our notions of nature. To give a new idea of Causation is to transform human thought; and we shall see how Mill, like Hume and Comte, but better than they, has put this idea into a new shape.

What is a cause? When Mill says that the contact of iron with moist air produces rust, or that heat dilates bodies, he does not speak of the mysterious bond by which metaphysicians connect cause and effect. He does not busy himself with the intimate force and generative virtue which certain philosophers insert between the thing producing and the product. Mill says:

“The only notion of a cause, which the theory of induction requires, is such a notion as can be gained from experience. The Law of Causation, the recognition of which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth, that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it; independently of all consideration respecting the ulterior mode of production of phenomena, and of every other question regarding the nature of ‘Things in themselves.’”¹

No other foundation underlies these two expressions. We mean simply that everywhere, always, the contact

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 359.

of iron with the moist air will be followed by the appearance of rust; the application of heat by the dilatation of bodies: "The real cause is the whole of these antecedents."¹ "There is no scientific foundation for distinguishing between the cause of a phenomenon and the conditions of its happening. . . . The distinction drawn between the patient and the agent is purely verbal." "The cause, then, philosophically speaking, is the sum total of the conditions, positive and negative, taken together; the whole of the contingencies of every description, which being realised, the consequent invariably follows."² Much argument has been expended on the word necessary: "If there be any meaning which confessedly belongs to the term necessity, it is *unconditionality*. That which is necessary, that which *must* be, means that which will be, whatever supposition we may make in regard to all other things."³ This is all we mean when we assert that the notion of cause includes the notion of necessity. We mean that the antecedent is sufficient and complete, that there is no need to suppose any additional antecedent, that it contains all requisite conditions, and that no other condition need exist. To follow unconditionally, then, is the whole notion of cause and effect. We have none else. Philosophers are mistaken when they discover in our will a different type of causation, and declare it an example of efficient cause in act and in exercise. We see nothing of the kind, but there, as elsewhere, we find only continuous successions. We do not see a fact engendering another fact, but a fact accompanying another. "Our will," says Mill, "produces our bodily actions as cold produces ice, or as a spark

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 360.² *Ibid.* i. 365.³ *Ibid.* i. 372.

produces an explosion of gunpowder." There is here, as elsewhere, an antecedent, the resolution or state of mind, and a consequent, the effort or physical sensation. Experience connects them, and enables us to foresee that the effort will follow the resolution, as it enables us to foresee that the explosion of gunpowder will follow the contact of the spark. Let us then have done with all these psychological illusions, and seek only, under the names of cause and effect, for phenomena which form pairs without exception or condition.

Now, to establish these connections of phenomena, Mill discovers four methods, and only four,—namely, the Methods of Agreement,¹ of Difference,² of Resi-

¹ "If we take fifty crucibles of molten matter and let them cool, and fifty solutions and let them evaporate, all will crystallize. Sulphur, sugar, alum, salt—substances, temperatures, circumstances—all are as different as they can be. We find one, and only one, common fact—the change from the liquid to the solid state—and conclude, therefore, that this change is the invariable antecedent of crystallization. Here we have an example of the Method of Agreement. Its canon is :—

"I. If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon."—MILL'S *Logic*, i. 422.

² "A bird in the air breathes ; plunged into carbonic acid gas, it ceases to breathe. In other words, in the second case, suffocation ensues. In other respects the two cases are as similar as possible, since we have the same bird in both, and they take place in immediate succession. They differ only in the circumstance of immersion in carbonic acid gas being substituted for immersion in the atmosphere, and we conclude that this circumstance is invariably followed by suffocation. The Method of Difference is here employed. Its canon is :—

"II. If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former ; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon."—MILL'S *Logic*, i. 423.

dues,¹ and of Concomitant Variations.² These are the only ways by which we can penetrate into nature. There are no other, and these are everywhere. And they all employ the same artifice, that is to say, *elimination*; for, in fact, induction is nothing else. You have two

¹ ["A combination of these methods is sometimes employed, and is termed the Indirect Method of Difference, or the Joint Method of Agreement and Difference. It is, in fact, a double employment of the Method of Agreement, first applying that method to instances in which the phenomenon in question occurs, and then to instances in which it does not occur. The following is its canon:—

"III. If two or more instances in which the phenomenon occurs have only one circumstance in common, while two or more instances in which it does not occur have nothing in common, save the absence of that circumstance; the circumstance in which alone the two sets of instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon."—MILL's *Logic*, i. 429.

"If we take two groups—one of antecedents and one of consequents—and can succeed in connecting by previous investigations all the antecedents but one to their respective consequents, and all the consequents but one to their respective antecedents, we conclude that the remaining antecedent is connected to the remaining consequent. For example, scientific men had calculated what ought to be the velocity of sound according to the laws of the propagation of sonorous waves, but found that a sound actually travelled quicker than their calculations had indicated. This surplus or residue of speed was a consequent for which an antecedent had to be found. Laplace discovered the antecedent in the heat developed by the condensation of each sonorous wave, and this new element, when introduced into the calculation, rendered it perfectly accurate. This is an example of the Method of Residues, the canon of which is as follows:—

"IV. Subduct from any phenomenon such part as is known by previous inductions to be the effect of certain antecedents, and the residue of the phenomenon is the effect of the remaining antecedents."—MILL's *Logic*, i. 431

"Let us take two facts—as the presence of the earth and the oscillation of the pendulum, or again the presence of the moon and the flow of the tide. To connect these phenomena directly, we should have to suppress the first of them, and see if this suppression would occasion the stoppage of the second. Now, in both instances, such suppression

groups, one of antecedents, the other of consequents, each of them containing more or fewer elements, ten, for example. To what antecedent is each consequent joined? Is the first consequent joined to the first antecedent, or to the third, or sixth? The whole difficulty, and the only possible solution lie there. To resolve the difficulty, and to effect the solution, we must eliminate, that is, exclude those antecedents which are not connected with the consequent we are considering.¹ But as we cannot exclude them effectually, and as in nature the pair of phenomena we are seeking is always surrounded with circumstances, we collect various cases, which by their diversity enable the mind to lop off these circumstances, and to discover the pair of phenomena distinctly. In short, we can only perform induction by discovering pairs of phenomena: we form these only by isolation; we isolate only by means of comparisons.

is impossible. So we employ an indirect means of connecting the phenomena. We observe that all the variations of the one correspond to certain variations of the other; that all the oscillations of the pendulum correspond to certain different positions of the earth; that all states of the tide correspond to positions of the moon. From this we conclude that the second fact is the antecedent of the first. These are examples of the Method of Concomitant Variations. Its canon is:—

“V. Whatever phenomenon varies in any manner whenever another phenomenon varies in some particular manner, is either a cause or an effect of that phenomenon, or is connected with it through some fact of causation.”—MILL'S *Logic*, i. 435.

¹ “The Method of Agreement,” says Mill (*Logic*, i. 424), “stands on the ground that whatever can be eliminated, is not connected with the phenomenon by any law. The Method of Difference has for its foundation, that whatever can *not* be eliminated, *is* connected with the phenomenon by a law.” The Method of Residues is a case of the Method of Differences. The Method of Concomitant Variations is another case of the same method; with this distinction, that it is applied, not to the phenomena, but to their variations.

VIII.

These are the rules; an example will make them clearer. We will show you the methods in exercise; here is an example which combines nearly the whole of them, namely, Dr. Well's theory of dew. I will give it to you in Mill's own words, which are so clear that you must have the pleasure of pondering over them: "We must separate dew from rain and the moisture of fogs, and limit the application of the term to what is really meant, which is, the spontaneous appearance of moisture on substances exposed in the open air when no rain or *visible* wet is falling."¹ What is the cause of the phenomena we have thus defined, and how was that cause discovered?

"'Now, here we have analogous phenomena in the moisture which bedews a cold metal or stone when we breathe upon it; that which appears on a glass of water fresh from the well in hot weather; that which appears on the inside of windows when sudden rain or hail chills the external air; that which runs down our walls when, after a long frost, a warm moist thaw comes on.' Comparing these cases, we find that they all contain the phenomenon which was proposed as the subject of investigation. Now 'all these instances agree in one point, the coldness of the object dewed in comparison with the air in contact with it.' But there still remains the most important case of all, that of nocturnal dew: does the same circumstance exist in this case? 'Is it a fact that the object dewed is colder than the air? Certainly not, one would at first be inclined to say; for what is to *make* it so? But . . . the experiment is easy; we have only to lay a thermometer in contact with the dewed substance,

¹ This quotation, and all the others in this paragraph, are taken from Mill's *Logic*, i. 451-9. Mr. Mill quotes from Sir John Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*.

and hang one at a little distance above it, out of reach of its influence. The experiment has been therefore made; the question has been asked, and the answer has been invariably in the affirmative. Whenever an object contracts dew, it is colder than the air.'

"Here then is a complete application of the Method of Agreement, establishing the fact of an invariable connection between the deposition of dew on a surface, and the coldness of that surface compared with the external air. But which of these is cause, and which effect? or are they both effects of something else? On this subject the Method of Agreement can afford us no light: we must call in a more potent method. 'We must collect more facts, or, which comes to the same thing, vary the circumstances; since every instance in which the circumstances differ is a fresh fact: and especially, we must note the contrary or negative cases, i.e. where no dew is produced: 'for a comparison between instances of dew and instances of no dew, is the condition necessary to bring the Method of Difference into play.

"'Now, first, no dew is produced on the surface of polished metals, but it is very copiously on glass, both exposed with their faces upwards, and in some cases the under side of a horizontal plate of glass is also dewed.' Here is an instance in which the effect is produced, and another instance in which it is not produced; but we cannot yet pronounce, as the canon of the Method of Difference requires, that the latter instance agrees with the former in all its circumstances except one: for the differences between glass and polished metals are manifold, and the only thing we can as yet be sure of is, that the cause of dew will be found among the circumstances by which the former substance is distinguished from the latter."

To detect this particular circumstance of difference, we have but one practicable method, that of Concomitant Variations:

“‘In the cases of polished metal and polished glass, the contrast shows evidently that the *substance* has much to do with the phenomenon ; therefore let the substance *alone* be diversified as much as possible, by exposing polished surfaces of various kinds. This done, a *scale of intensity* becomes obvious. Those polished substances are found to be most strongly dewed which conduct heat worst, while those which conduct well resist dew most effectually.’ . . .

“The conclusion obtained is, that *ceteris paribus* the deposition of dew is in some proportion to the power which the body possesses of resisting the passage of heat ; and that this, therefore (or something connected with this), must be at least one of the causes which assist in producing the deposition of dew on the surface.

“‘But if we expose rough surfaces instead of polished, we sometimes find this law interfered with. Thus, roughened iron, especially if painted over or blackened, becomes dewed sooner than varnished paper : the kind of *surface*, therefore, has a great influence. Expose, then, the *same* material in very diversified states as to surface’ (that is, employ the Method of Difference to ascertain concomitance of variations), ‘and another scale of intensity becomes at once apparent ; those *surfaces* which *part with their heat* most readily by radiation, are found to contract dew most copiously.’ . . .

“The conclusion obtained by this new application of the method is, that *ceteris paribus* the deposition of dew is also in some proportion to the power of radiating heat ; and that the quality of doing this abundantly (or some cause on which that quality depends) is another of the causes which promote the deposition of dew on the substance.

“‘Again, the influence ascertained to exist of *substance* and *surface* leads us to consider that of *texture* ; and here, again, we are presented on trial with remarkable differences, and with a third scale of intensity, pointing out substances of a close firm texture, such as stones, metals, etc., as unfavourable, but those

of a loose one, as cloth, velvet, wool, eiderdown, cotton, etc., as eminently favourable to the contraction of dew.' The Method of Concomitant Variations is here, for the third time, had recourse to; and, as before, from necessity, since the texture of no substance is absolutely firm or absolutely loose. Looseness of texture, therefore, or something which is the cause of that quality, is another circumstance which promotes the deposition of dew; but this third cause resolves itself into the first, viz., the quality of resisting the passage of heat: for substances of loose texture 'are precisely those which are best adapted for clothing, or for impeding the free passage of heat from the skin into the air, so as to allow their outer surfaces to be very cold, while they remain warm within.' . . .

"It thus appears that the instances in which much dew is deposited, which are very various, agree in this, and, so far as we are able to observe, in this only, that they either radiate heat rapidly or conduct it slowly: qualities between which there is no other circumstance of agreement than that by virtue of either, the body tends to lose heat from the surface more rapidly than it can be restored from within. The instances, on the contrary, in which no dew or but a small quantity of it, is formed, and which are also extremely various, agree (so far as we can observe) in nothing except in *not* having this same property. . . .

"This doubt we are now able to resolve. We have found that, in every such instance, the substance must be one which, by its own properties or laws, would, if exposed in the night, become colder than the surrounding air. The coldness, therefore, being accounted for independently of the dew, while it is proved that there is a connection between the two, it must be the dew which depends on the coldness; or, in other words, the coldness is the cause of the dew.

"This law of causation, already so amply established, admits, however, of efficient additional corroboration in no less than three ways. First, by deduction from the known laws of aqueous vapour when diffused through air or any other gas,

and though we have not yet come to the Deductive Method, we will not omit what is necessary to render this speculation complete. It is known by direct experiment that only a limited quantity of water can remain suspended in the state of vapour at each degree of temperature, and that this maximum grows less and less as the temperature diminishes. From this it follows deductively, that if there is already as much vapour suspended as the air will contain at its existing temperature, any lowering of that temperature will cause a portion of the vapour to be condensed, and become water. But, again, we know deductively, from the laws of heat, that the contact of the air with a body colder than itself, will necessarily lower the temperature of the stratum of air immediately applied to its surface; and will therefore cause it to part with a portion of its water, which accordingly will, by the ordinary laws of gravitation or cohesion, attach itself to the surface of the body, thereby constituting dew. This deductive proof, it will have been seen, has the advantage of proving at once causation as well as co-existence; and it has the additional advantage that it also accounts for the *exceptions* to the occurrence of the phenomenon, the cases in which, although the body is colder than the air, yet no dew is deposited, by showing that this will necessarily be the case when the air is so under-supplied with aqueous vapour, comparatively to its temperature, that even when somewhat cooled by the contact of the colder body, it can still continue to hold in suspension all the vapour which was previously suspended in it: thus in a very dry summer there are no dews, in a very dry winter no hoar frost. . . .

“The second corroboration of the theory is by direct experiment, according to the canon of the Method of Difference. We can, by cooling the surface of any body, find in all cases some temperature (more or less inferior to that of the surrounding air, according to its hygrometric condition) at which dew will begin to be deposited. Here, too, therefore, the causation is directly proved. We can, it is true, accomplish this only on a small

scale ; but we have ample reason to conclude that the same operation, if conducted in Nature's great laboratory, would equally produce the effect.

“ And, finally, even on that great scale we are able to verify the result. The case is one of those rare cases, as we have shown them to be, in which nature works the experiment for us in the same manner in which we ourselves perform it ; introducing into the previous state of things a single and perfectly definite new circumstance, and manifesting the effect so rapidly that there is not time for any other material change in the pre-existing circumstances. ‘ It is observed that dew is never copiously deposited in situations much screened from the open sky, and not at all in a cloudy night ; but *if the clouds withdraw even for a few minutes, and leave a clear opening, a deposition of dew presently begins, and goes on increasing.* . . . Dew formed in clear intervals will often even evaporate again when the sky becomes thickly overcast.’ The proof, therefore, is complete, that the presence or absence of an uninterrupted communication with the sky causes the deposition or non-deposition of dew. Now, since a clear sky is nothing but the absence of clouds, and it is a known property of clouds, as of all other bodies between which and any given object nothing intervenes but an elastic fluid, that they tend to raise or keep up the superficial temperature of the object by radiating heat to it, we see at once that the disappearance of clouds will cause the surface to cool ; so that Nature in this case produces a change in the antecedent by definite and known means, and the consequent follows accordingly : a natural experiment which satisfies the requisitions of the Method of Difference.”

IX.

These four are not all the scientific methods, but they lead up to the rest. They are all linked together, and no one has shown their connection better than Mill.

In many cases these processes of isolation are powerless; namely, in those in which the effect, being produced by a concurrence of causes, cannot be reduced into its elements. Methods of isolation are then impracticable. We cannot eliminate, and consequently we cannot perform induction. This serious difficulty presents itself in almost all cases of motion, for almost every movement is the effect of a concurrence of forces; and the respective effects of the various forces are found so mixed up in it that we cannot separate them without destroying it, so that it seems impossible to tell what part each force has in the production of the movement. Take a body acted upon by two forces whose directions form an angle: it moves along the diagonal; each part, each moment, each position, each element of its movement, is the combined effect of the two impelling forces. The two effects are so commingled, that we cannot isolate either of them, and refer it to its source. In order to perceive each effect separately, we should have to consider the movements apart, that is, to suppress the actual movement, and to replace it by others. Neither the Method of Agreement, nor of Difference, nor of Residues, nor of Concomitant Variations, which are all decomposing and eliminative, can avail against a phenomenon which by its nature excludes all elimination and decomposition. We must therefore evade the obstacle; and it is here that the last key of nature appears, the Method of Deduction. We quit the study of the actual phenomenon to observe other and simpler cases; we establish their laws, and we connect each with its cause by the ordinary methods of induction. Then, assuming the concurrence of two or of several of these causes, we conclude from their known laws what

will be their total effect. We next satisfy ourselves as to whether the actual movement exactly coincides with the movement foretold; and if this is so, we attribute it to the causes from which we have deduced it. Thus, in order to discover the causes of the planetary motions, we seek by simple induction the laws of two causes: first, the force of primitive impulsion in the direction of the tangent; next, an accelerative attracting force. From these inductive laws we deduce by calculation the motion of a body submitted to their combined influence; and satisfying ourselves that the planetary motions observed coincide exactly with the predicted movements, we conclude that the two forces in question are actually the causes of the planetary motions. "To the Deductive Method," says Mill, "the human mind is indebted for its most conspicuous triumphs in the investigation of nature. To it we owe all the theories by which vast and complicated phenomena are embraced under a few simple laws." Our deviations have led us further than the direct path; we have derived efficiency from imperfection.

X.

If we now compare the two methods, their aptness, function, and provinces, we shall find, as in an abstract, the history, divisions, hopes, and limits of human science. The first appears at the beginning, the second at the end. The first necessarily gained ascendancy in Bacon's time,¹ and now begins to lose it; the second necessarily lost ascendancy in Bacon's time, and now begins to regain it. So that science, after having

¹ Mill's *Logic*, i. 526.

passed from the deductive to the experimental state, is now passing from the experimental to the deductive. Induction has for its province phenomena which are capable of being decomposed, and on which we can experiment. Deduction has for its province indecomposable phenomena, or those on which we cannot experiment. The first is efficacious in physics, chemistry, zoology, and botany, in the earlier stages of every science, and also whenever phenomena are but slightly complicated, within our reach, capable of being modified by means at our disposal. The second is efficacious in astronomy, in the higher branches of physics, in physiology, history, in the higher grades of every science, whenever phenomena are very complicated, as in animal and social life, or lie beyond our reach, as the motions of the heavenly bodies and the changes of the atmosphere. When the proper method is not employed, science is at a stand-still: when it is employed, science progresses. Here lies the whole secret of its past and its present. If the physical sciences remained stationary till the time of Bacon, it was because men used deduction when they should have used induction. If physiology and the moral sciences are now making slow progress, it is because we employ induction when deduction should be used. It is by deduction, and according to physical and chemical laws, that we shall be enabled to explain physiological phenomena. It is by deduction, and according to mental laws, that we shall be enabled to explain historical phenomena.¹ And that which has

¹ See chapter 9, book vi. v. 2, 478, on *The Physical or Concrete Deductive Method as applied to Sociology*; and chapter 18, book iii., for explanations, after Liebig, of *Decomposition, Respiration, the Action of Poisons, etc.* A whole book is devoted to the logic of the moral sciences; I know no better treatise on the subject.

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SIR ISAAC NEWTON

become the instrument of these two sciences, it is the object of all the others to employ. All tend to become deductive, and aim at being summed up in certain general propositions, from which the rest may be deduced. The less numerous these propositions are, the more science advances. The fewer suppositions and postulates a science requires, the more perfect it is become. Such a reduction is its final condition. Astronomy, acoustics, optics, present its models; we shall know nature when we shall have deduced her millions of facts from two or three laws.

I venture to say that the theory which you have just heard is perfect. I have omitted several of its characteristics, but you have seen enough to recognise that induction has nowhere been explained in so complete and precise a manner, with such an abundance of fine and just distinctions, with such extensive and exact applications, with such a knowledge of the practical methods and ascertained results of science, with so complete an exclusion of metaphysical principles and arbitrary suppositions, and in a spirit more in conformity with the rigorous procedure of modern experimental science. You asked me just now what Englishmen have effected in philosophy; I answer, the theory of Induction. Mill is the last of that great line of philosophers, which begins at Bacon, and which, through Hobbes, Newton, Locke, Hume, Herschell, is continued down to our own times. They have carried our national spirit into philosophy; they have been positive and practical; they have not soared above facts; they have not attempted out-of-the-way paths; they have cleared the human mind of its illusions, presumptions, and fancies. They have employed it in the only direction in which

it can act; they only wished to mark out and light up the already well-trodden ways of the progressive sciences. They have not been willing to spend their labour vainly in other than explored and verified paths; they have aided in the great modern work, the discovery of applicable laws; they have contributed, as men of special attainments do, to the increase of man's power. Can you find many philosophers who have done as much?

XI.

You will tell me that our philosopher has clipped his wings in order to strengthen his legs. Certainly; and he has acted wisely. Experience limits the career which it opens to us; it has given us our goal, but also our boundaries. We have only to observe the elements of which our experience is composed, and the facts from which it sets out, to understand that its range is limited. Its nature and its method confine its progress to a few steps. And, in the first place,¹ the ultimate laws of nature cannot be less numerous than the several distinct species of our sensations. We can easily reduce a movement to another movement, but not the sensation of heat to that of smell, or of colour, or of sound, nor either of these to a movement. We can easily connect together phenomena of different degrees, but not phenomena differing in species. We find distinct sensations at the bottom of all our knowledge, as simple indecomposable elements, separated absolutely one from another, absolutely incapable of being reduced one to another. Let experience do what she will, she cannot suppress these diversities which

¹ Mill's *Logic*, ii. 4.

stitute her foundation. On the other hand, experience what she will, cannot escape from the condition under which she acts. Whatever be her province, bounded by time and space; the fact which she observes, is limited and influenced by an infinite number of facts to which she cannot attain. She is obliged to suppose or recognise some primordial condition from which she starts, and which she does not explain.¹ Every problem has its accidental or arbitrary data: we receive the rest from these, but there is nothing from which these can be deduced. The sun, the earth, the stars, the initial impulse of the heavenly bodies, the primitive chemical properties of substances, are such facts. If we possessed them all we could explain

¹ 'There exists in nature a number of Permanent Causes, which have existed ever since the human race has been in existence, and for an indefinite and probably an enormous length of time previous. The earth, and planets, with their various constituents, air, water, and other distinguishable substances, whether simple or compound, of which nature is made up, are such Permanent Causes. They have produced, and the effects or consequences which they were fitted to produce have taken place (as often as the other conditions of the production have been present) from the very beginning of our experience. But we can give no account of the origin of the Permanent Causes themselves.'—MILL'S *Logic*, i. 378.

'The resolution of the laws of the heavenly motions established previously unknown ultimate property of a mutual attraction in all bodies: the resolution, so far as it has yet proceeded, of laws of crystallisation, or chemical composition, electricity, magnetism, etc., points to various polarities, ultimately inherent in the parts of which bodies are composed; the comparative atomic weights of different kinds of bodies were ascertained by resolving, into more elementary laws, the uniformities observed in the proportions in which elements combine with one another; and so forth. Thus, although the resolution of a complex uniformity into simpler and more elementary laws has an apparent tendency to diminish the number of ultimate properties, and really does remove many properties from the list; yet (since the result of this simplifying process is to trace

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everything by them, but we could not explain these themselves. Mill says :

“ Why these particular natural agents existed originally and no others, or why they are commingled in such and such proportions, and distributed in such and such a manner throughout space, is a question we cannot answer. More than this : we can discover nothing regular in the distribution itself ; we can reduce it to no uniformity, to no law. There are no means by which, from the distribution of these causes or agents in one part of space, we could conjecture whether a similar distribution prevails in another.”¹

And astronomy, which, just now, afforded us the model of a perfect science, now affords us an example of a limited science. We can predict the numberless positions of all the planetary bodies ; but we are obliged to assume, beside the primitive impulse and its amount, not only the force of attraction and its law, but also the masses and distances of all the bodies in question. We understand millions of facts, but it is by means of a hundred facts which we do not comprehend ; we arrive at necessary results, but it is only by means of accidental antecedents ; so that if the theory of our universe were completed there would still remain two great voids : one at the commencement of the physical world, the other at the beginning of the moral world ; the one comprising the elements of being, the other embracing the elements of experience ; one containing primary

up an ever greater variety of different effects to the same agents), the further we advance in this direction, the greater number of distinct properties we are forced to recognise in one and the same object ; the co-existences of which properties must accordingly be ranked among the ultimate generalities of nature.”—MILL'S *Logic*, ii. 108.

¹ *Ibid.* i. 378.

sensations, the other primitive agents. "Our knowledge," says Royer-Collard, "consists in tracing ignorance as far back as possible."

Can we at least affirm that these irreducible data are so only in appearance, and in relation to our mind? Can we say that they have causes, like the derived facts of which they are the causes? Can we conclude that every event, always and everywhere, happens according to laws, and that this little world of ours, so well regulated, is a sort of epitome of the universe? Can we by aid of the axioms, quit our narrow confines, and affirm anything of the universe? In no wise; and it is here that Mill pushes his principles to their furthest consequences: for the law which attributes a cause to every event, has to him no other foundation, worth, or scope, than what it derives from experience. It has no inherent necessity; it draws its whole authority from the great number of cases in which we have recognised it to be true; it only sums up a mass of observations; it unites two data, which, considered in themselves, have no intimate connection; it joins antecedents generally to consequents generally, just as the law of gravitation joins a particular antecedent to a particular consequent; it determines a couple, as do all experimental laws, and shares in their uncertainty and in their restrictions. Listen to this bold assertion:

"I am convinced that any one accustomed to abstraction and analysis, who will fairly exert his faculties for the purpose, will, when his imagination has once learnt to entertain the notion, find no difficulty in conceiving that in some one, for instance, of the many firmaments into which sidereal astronomy now divides the universe, events may succeed one another at random, without any fixed law; nor can anything in our experience, or in

our mental nature, constitute a sufficient, or indeed any, reason for believing that this is nowhere the case. The grounds, therefore, which warrant us in rejecting such a supposition with respect to any of the phenomena of which we have experience, must be sought elsewhere than in any supposed necessity of our intellectual faculties." ¹

Practically, we may trust in so well-established a law ; but

" In distant parts of the stellar regions, where the phenomena may be entirely unlike those with which we are acquainted, it would be folly to affirm confidently that this general law prevails, any more than those special ones which we have found to hold universally on our own planet. The uniformity in the succession of events, otherwise called the law of causation, must be received not as a law of the universe, but of that portion of it only which is within the range of our means of sure observation, with a reasonable degree of extension to adjacent cases. To extend it further is to make a supposition without evidence, and to which, in the absence of any ground from experience for estimating its degree of probability, it would be idle to attempt to assign any." ²

We are, then, irrevocably driven back from the infinite ; our faculties and our assertions cannot attain to it ; we remain confined in a small circle ; our mind reaches not beyond its experience ; we can establish no universal and necessary connection between facts ; such a connection probably does not even exist. Mill stops here ; but certainly, by carrying out his idea to its full extent, we should arrive at the conception of the world as a mere collection of facts ; no internal necessity would induce their connection or their existence ; they would be simple arbitrary, accidentally-existing facts.

¹ Mill's *Logic*, ii. 95.

² *Ibid.* ii. 104.

Sometimes, as in our system, they would be found assembled in such a manner as to give rise to regular recurrences; sometimes they would be so assembled that nothing of the sort would occur. Chance, as Democritus taught, would be at the foundation of all things. Laws would be the result of chance, and sometimes we should find them, sometimes not. It would be with existences as with numbers—decimal fractions, for instance, which according to the chance of their two primitive factors, sometimes recur regularly, and sometimes not. This is certainly an original and lofty conception. It is the final consequence of the primitive and dominant idea, which we have discovered at the beginning of the system, which has transformed the theories of Definition, of Propositions, and of the Syllogism; which has reduced axioms to experimental truths; which has developed and perfected the theory of induction; which has established the goal, the limits, the province, and the methods of science; which everywhere, in nature and in science, has suppressed interior connections; which has replaced the necessary by the accidental; cause by antecedent; and which consists in affirming that every assertion which is not merely verbal forms in effect a couple, that is to say, joins together two facts which were separate by their nature.

§ 2.—ABSTRACTION.

I.

An abyss of chance and an abyss of ignorance. The prospect is gloomy: no matter, if it be true. At all events, this theory of science is a theory of English science. Rarely, I grant you, has a thinker better

summed up in his teaching the practice of his country; seldom has a man better represented by his negations and his discoveries the limits and scope of his race. The operations, of which he constructs science, are those in which the English excel all others, and those which he excludes from science are precisely those in which the English are deficient more than any other nation. He has described the English mind whilst he thought to describe the human mind. That is his glory, but it is also his weakness. There is in your idea of knowledge a flaw of which the incessant repetition ends by creating the gulf of chance, from which, according to him, all things arise, and the gulf of ignorance, at whose brink, according to him, our knowledge ends. And see what comes of it. By cutting away from science the knowledge of first causes, that is, of divine things, you reduce men to become sceptical, positive, utilitarian, if they are cool-headed; or mystical, enthusiastic, methodistical, if they have lively imaginations. In this huge unknown void which you place beyond our little world, passionate men and uneasy consciences find room for all their dreams; and men of cold judgment, despairing of arriving at any certain knowledge, have nothing left but to sink down to the search for practical means which may serve for the amelioration of our condition. It seems to me that these two dispositions are most frequently met with in an English mind. The religious and the positive spirit dwell there side by side, but separate. This produces an odd medley, and I confess that I prefer the way in which the Germans have reconciled science with faith.—But their philosophy is but badly written poetry.—Perhaps so.—But what they call reason, or intuition of principles, is only

the faculty of building up hypotheses.—Perhaps so.—But the systems which they have constructed have not held their ground before experience.—I do not defend what they have done.—But their absolute, their subject, their object, and the rest, are but big words.—I do not defend their style.—What, then, do you defend?—Their idea of Causation.—You believe with them that causes are discovered by a revelation of the reason!—By no means.—You believe with us that our knowledge of causes is based on simple experience?—Still less.—You think, then, that there is a faculty, other than experience and reason, capable of discovering causes?—Yes.—You think there is an intermediate course between intuition and observation, capable of arriving at principles, as it is affirmed that the first is, capable of arriving at truths, as we find that the second is?—Yes.—What is it? Abstraction. Let us return to your original idea; I will endeavour to show in what I think it incomplete, and how you seem to me to mutilate the human mind. But my argument will be the formal one of an advocate, and requires to be stated at length.

II.

Your starting-point is good: man, in fact, does not know anything of substances; he knows neither minds nor bodies; he perceives only transient, isolated, internal conditions; he makes use of these to affirm and name exterior states, positions, movements, changes, and avails himself of them for nothing else. He can only attain to facts, whether within or without, sometimes transient, when his impression is not repeated; sometimes permanent, when his impression many times

repeated, makes him suppose that it will be repeated as often as he wishes to experience it. He only grasps colours, sounds, resistances, movements, sometimes momentary and variable, sometimes like one another, and renewed. To group these facts more advantageously, he supposes, by an artifice of language, qualities and properties. We go even further than you : we think that there are neither minds nor bodies, but simply groups of present or possible movements or thoughts. We believe that there are no substances, but only systems of facts. We regard the idea of substance as a psychological illusion. We consider substance, force, and all the modern metaphysical existences, as the remains of scholastic entities. We think that there exists nothing but facts and laws, that is, events and the relations between them ; and we recognise, with you, that all knowledge consists first of all in connecting or adding fact to fact. But when this is done, a new operation begins, the most fertile of all, which consists in reducing these complex into simple facts. A splendid faculty appears, the source of language, the interpreter of nature, the parent of religions and philosophies, the only genuine distinction, which, according to its degree, separates man from the brute, and great from little men. I mean Abstraction, which is the power of isolating the elements of facts, and of considering them one by one. My eyes follow the outline of a square, and abstraction isolates its two constituent properties, the equality of its sides and angles. My fingers touch the surface of a cylinder, and abstraction isolates its two generative elements, the idea of a rectangle, and of the revolution of this rectangle about one of its sides as an axis. A hundred thousand

experiments develop for me, by an infinite number of details, the series of physiological operations which constitute life; and abstraction isolates the law of this series, which is a round of constant loss and continual reparation. Twelve hundred pages teach me Mill's opinion on the various facts of science, and abstraction isolates his fundamental idea, namely, that the only fertile propositions are those which connect a fact with another not contained in the first. Everywhere the case is the same. A fact, or a series of facts, can always be resolved into its components. It is this resolution which forms our problem, when we ask what is the nature of an object. It is these components we look for when we wish to penetrate into the inner nature of a being. These we designate under the names of forces, causes, laws, essences, primitive properties. They are not new facts added to the first, but an essence or extract from them; they are contained in the first, they have no existence apart from the facts themselves. When we discover them, we do not pass from one fact to another, but from one to another aspect of the same fact; from the whole to a part, from the compound to the components. We only see the same thing under two forms; first, as a whole, then as divided: we only translate the same idea from one language into another, from the language of the senses into abstract language, just as we express a curve by an equation, or a cube as a function of its side. It signifies little whether this translation be difficult or not; or that we generally need the accumulation or comparison of a vast number of facts to arrive at it, and whether our mind may not often succumb before accomplishing it. However this may be, in this opera-

tion, which is evidently fertile, instead of proceeding from one fact to another, we go from the same to the same; instead of adding experiment to experiment, we set aside some portion of the first; instead of advancing, we pause to examine the ground we stand on. There are, thus, fruitful judgments, which, however, are not the results of experience: there are essential propositions, which, however, are not merely verbal: there is, thus, an operation, differing from experience, which acts by cutting down instead of by addition; which, instead of acquiring, devotes itself to acquired data; and which, going farther than observation, opening a new field to the sciences, defines their nature, determines their progress, completes their resources, and marks out their end.

This is the great omission of your system. Abstraction is left in the background, barely mentioned, concealed by the other operations of the mind, treated as an appendage of Experience; we have but to re-establish it in the general theory, in order to reform the particular theories in which it is absent.

III.

To begin with Definitions. Mill teaches that there is no definition of things, and that when you define a sphere as the solid generated by the revolution of a semicircle about its diameter, you only define a name. Doubtless you tell me by this the meaning of a name, but you also teach me a good deal more. You state that all the properties of every sphere are derived from this generating formula; you reduce an infinitely complex system of facts to two elements; you transform

sensible into abstract data; you express the essence of the sphere, that is to say, the inner and primordial cause of all its properties. Such is the nature of every true definition; it is not content with explaining a name, it is not a mere description; it does not simply indicate a distinctive property; it does not limit itself to that ticketing of an object which will cause it to be distinguished from all others. There are, besides its definition, several other ways of causing the object to be recognised; there are other properties belonging to it exclusively: we might describe a sphere by saying that, of all bodies having an equal surface, it occupies the most space; or in many other ways. But such descriptions are not definitions; they lay down a characteristic and derived property, not a generating and primitive one; they do not reduce the thing to its factors, and reconstruct it before our eyes; they do not show its inner nature and its irreducible elements. A definition is a proposition which marks in an object that quality from which its others are derived, but which is not derived from others. Such a proposition is not verbal, for it teaches the quality of a thing. It is not the affirmation of an ordinary quality, for it reveals to us the quality which is the source of the rest. It is an assertion of an extraordinary kind, the most fertile and valuable of all, which sums up a whole science, and in which it is the aim of every science to be summed up. There is a definition in every science, and one for each object. We do not in every case possess it, but we search for it everywhere. We have arrived at defining the planetary motion by the tangential force and attraction which compose it; we can already partially define a chemical body by the notion

of equivalent, and a living body by the notion of type. We are striving to transform every group of phenomena into certain laws, forces, or abstract notions. We endeavour to attain in every object the generating elements, as we do attain them in the sphere, the cylinder, the circle, the cone, and in all mathematical loci. We reduce natural bodies to two or three kinds of movement—attraction, vibration, polarisation—as we reduce geometrical bodies to two or three kinds of elements—the point, the movement, the line; and we consider our science partial or complete, provisional or definite, according as this reduction is approximate or absolute, imperfect or complete.

IV.

The same alteration is required in the Theory of Proof. According to Mill, we do not prove that Prince Albert will die by premising that all men are mortal, for that would be asserting the same thing twice over; but from the facts that John, Peter, and others, in short, all men of whom we have ever heard, have died.—I reply that the real source of our inference lies neither in the mortality of John, Peter, and company, nor in the mortality of all men, but elsewhere. We prove a fact, says Aristotle,¹ by showing its cause. We shall therefore prove the mortality of Prince Albert by showing the cause which produces his death. And why will he die? Because the human body, being an unstable chemical compound, must in time be resolved; in other words, because mortality is added to the quality

¹ See the Posterior Analytics, which are much superior to the Prior —*ἡ αἰτία καὶ πρῶτον*.

of man. Here is the cause and the proof. It is this abstract law which, present in nature, will cause the death of the prince, and which, being present to my mind, shows me that he will die. It is this abstract proposition which is demonstrative; it is neither the particular nor the general propositions. In fact, the abstract proposition proves the others. If John, Peter, and others are dead, it is because mortality is added to the quality of man. If all men are dead, or will die, it is still because mortality is added to the quality of man. Here, again, the part played by Abstraction has been overlooked. Mill has confounded it with Experience: he has not distinguished the proof from the materials of the proof, the abstract law from the finite or indefinite number of its applications. The applications contain the law and the proof, but are themselves neither law nor proof. The examples of Peter, John, and others, contain the cause, but they are not the cause. It is not sufficient to add up the cases, we must extract from them the law. It is not enough to experimentalise, we must abstract. This is the great scientific operation. Syllogism does not proceed from the particular to the particular, as Mill says, nor from the general to the particular, as the ordinary logicians teach, but from the abstract to the concrete; that is to say, from cause to effect. It is on this ground that it forms part of science, the links of which it makes and marks out; it connects principles with effects; it brings together definitions and phenomena. It diffuses through the whole range of science that Abstraction which definition has carried to its summit.

V.

Abstraction explains also axioms. According to Mill, if we know that when equal magnitudes are added to equal magnitudes the wholes are equal, or that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, it is by external ocular experiment, or by an internal experiment by the aid of imagination. Doubtless we may thus arrive at the conclusion that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, but we might recognise it also in another manner. We might represent a straight line in imagination, and we may also form a conception of it by reason. We may either study its form or its definition. We can observe it in itself, or in its generating elements. I can represent to myself a line ready drawn, but I can also resolve it into its elements. I can go back to its formation, and discover the abstract elements which produce it, as I have watched the formation of the cylinder and discover the revolution of the rectangle which generated it. It will not do to say that a straight line is the shortest from one point to another, for that is a derived property; but I may say that it is the line described by a point, tending to approach towards another point, and towards that point only: which amounts to saying that two points suffice to determine a straight line; in other words, that two straight lines, having two points in common, coincide in their entire length; from which we see that if two straight lines approach to enclose a space, they would form but one straight line, and enclose nothing at all. Here is a second method of arriving at a knowledge of the axiom, and it is clear that it differs much from the first. In the first we verify; in the second we deduce

it. In the first we find by experience that it is true; in the second we prove it to be true. In the first we admit the truth; in the second we explain it. In the first we merely remark that the contrary of the axiom is inconceivable; in the second we discover in addition that the contrary of the axiom is contradictory. Having given the definition of the straight line, we find that the axiom that two straight lines cannot enclose a space is comprised in it, and may be derived from it, as a consequent from a principle. In fact, it is nothing more than an identical proposition, which means that the subject contains its attribute; it does not connect two separate terms, irreducible one to the other; it unites two terms, of which the second is a part of the first. It is a simple analysis, and so are all axioms. We have only to decompose them, in order to see that they do not proceed from one object to a different one, but are concerned with one object only. We have but to resolve the notions of equality, cause, substance, time, and space into their abstracts, in order to demonstrate the axioms of equality, substance, cause, time, and space. There is but one axiom, that of identity. The others are only its applications or its consequences. When this is admitted, we at once see that the range of our mind is altered. We are no longer merely capable of relative and limited knowledge, but also of absolute and infinite knowledge; we possess in axioms facts which not only accompany one another, but one of which includes the other. If, as Mill says, they merely accompanied one another, we should be obliged to conclude with him, that perhaps this might not always be the case. We should not see the inner necessity for their connection, and should only admit it as far as our

experience went; we should say that, the two facts being isolated in their nature, circumstances might arise in which they would be separate; we should affirm the truth of axioms only in reference to our world and mind. If, on the contrary, the two facts are such that the first contains the second, we should establish on this very ground the necessity of their connection; wheresoever the first may be found, it will carry the second with it, since the second is a part of it, and cannot be separated from it. Nothing can exist between them and divide them, for they are but one thing under different aspects. Their connection is therefore absolute and universal; and we possess truths which admit neither doubt nor limitation, nor condition, nor restriction. Abstraction restores to axioms their value, whilst it shows their origin; and we restore to science her dispossessed dominion, by restoring to the mind the faculty of which it had been deprived.

VI.

Induction remains to be considered, which seems to be the triumph of pure experience, while it is, in reality, the triumph of abstraction. When I discover by induction that cold produces dew, or that the passage from the liquid to the solid state produces crystallisation, I establish a connection between two abstract facts. Neither cold, nor dew, nor the passage from the liquid to the solid state, nor crystallisation, exist in themselves. They are parts of phenomena, extracts from complex cases, simple elements included in compound aggregates. I withdraw and isolate them; I isolate dew in general from all local, temporary, special dews which I observe; I isolate cold in general from

all special, various distinct colds which may be produced by all varieties of texture, all diversities of substance, all inequalities of temperature, all complications of circumstances. I join an abstract antecedent to an abstract consequent, and I connect them, as Mill himself shows, by subtractions, suppressions, eliminations; I expel from the two groups, containing them, all the proximate circumstances; I discover the couple under the surroundings which obscure it; I detach, by a series of comparisons and experiments, all the subsidiary accidental circumstances which have clung to it, and thus I end by laying it bare. I seem to be considering twenty different cases, and in reality I only consider one; I appear to proceed by addition, and in fact I am performing subtraction. All the methods of Induction, therefore, are methods of Abstraction, and all the work of Induction is the connection of abstract facts.

VII.

We see now the two great moving powers of science, and the two great manifestations of nature. There are two operations, experience and abstraction; there are two kingdoms, that of complex facts, and that of simple elements. The first is the effect, the second the cause. The first is contained in the second, and is deduced from it, as a consequent from its principle. The two are equivalent, they are one and the same thing considered under two aspects. This magnificent moving universe, this tumultuous chaos of mutually dependent events, this incessant life, infinitely varied and multiplied, may be all reduced to a few elements and their relations. Our whole efforts result in passing

from one to the other, from the complex to the simple, from facts to laws, from experiences to formulæ. And the reason of this is evident; for this fact which I perceive by the senses or the consciousness is but a fragment arbitrarily severed by my senses or my consciousness from the infinite and continuous woof of existence. If they were differently constituted, they would intercept other fragments; it is the chance of their structure which determines what is actually perceived. They are like open compasses, which might be more or less extended; and the area of the circle which they describe is not natural, but artificial. It is so in two ways, both externally and internally. For, when I consider an event, I isolate it artificially from its natural surroundings, and I compose it artificially of elements which do not form a natural group. When I see a falling stone, I separate the fall from the anterior circumstances which are really connected with it; and I put together the fall, the form, the structure, the colour, the sound, and twenty other circumstances which are really not connected with it. A fact, then, is an arbitrary aggregate, and at the same time an arbitrary severing;¹ that is to say, a factitious group, which separates things connected, and connects things that are separate. Thus, so long as we only regard nature by observation, we do not see it as it is: we have only a provisional and illusory idea of it. Nature is, in reality, a tapestry, of which we only see the reverse; this is why we try to turn it. We strive to discover laws; that is, the natural groups which are really distinct from their surroundings, and composed

¹ An eminent student of physical science said to me: "A fact is a superposition of laws."

of elements really connected. We discover couples; that is to say, real compounds and real connections. We pass from the accidental to the necessary, from the relative to the absolute, from the appearance to the reality; and having found these first couples, we practise upon them the same operation as we did upon facts, for, though in a less degree, they are of the same nature. Though more abstract, they are still complex. They may be decomposed and explained. There is some ulterior reason for their existence. There is some cause or other which constructs and unites them. In their case, as well as for facts, we can search for generating elements into which they may be resolved, and from which they may be deduced. And this operation may be continued until we have arrived at elements wholly simple; that is to say, such that their decomposition would involve a contradiction. Whether we can find them or not, they exist; the axiom of causation would be falsified if they were absent. There are, then, indecomposable elements, from which are derived more general laws; and from these, again, more special laws; and from these the facts which we observe; just as in geometry there are two or three primitive notions, from which are deduced the properties of lines, and from these the properties of surfaces, solids, and the numberless forms which nature can produce or the mind imagine. We can now comprehend the value and meaning of that axiom of causation which governs all things, and which Mill has mutilated. There is an inner constraining force which gives rise to every event, which unites every compound, which engenders every actual fact. This signifies, on the one hand, that there is a reason for everything; that every fact has its law;

that every compound can be reduced to simple elements; that every product implies factors; that every quality and every being must be reducible from some superior and anterior term. And it signifies, on the other hand, that the product is equivalent to the factors, that both are but the same thing under different aspects; that the cause does not differ in nature from the effect; that the generating powers are but elementary properties; that the active force by which we represent Nature to our minds is but the logical necessity which mutually transforms the compound and the simple, the fact and the law. Thus we determine beforehand the limits of every science; and we possess the potent formula, which, establishing the invincible connection and the spontaneous production of existences, places in Nature the moving spring of Nature, whilst it drives home and fixes in the heart of every living thing the iron fangs of necessity.

VIII.

Can we arrive at a knowledge of these primary elements? For my part, I think we can; and the reason is, that, being abstractions, they are not beyond the region of facts, but are comprised in them, so that we have only to extract them from the facts. Besides, being the most abstract, that is, the most general of all things, there are no facts which do not comprise them, and from which we cannot extract them. However limited our experience may be, we can arrive at these primary notions; and it is from this observation that the modern German metaphysicians have started in attempting their vast constructions. They understood that there are simple notions, that is to say, indecom-

possible abstract facts, that the combinations of these engender all others, and that the laws for their mutual union or contrarieties, are the primary laws of the universe. They tried to attain to these ideas, and to evolve by pure reason the world as observation shows it to us. They have partly failed; and their gigantic edifice, factitious and fragile, hangs in ruins, reminding one of those temporary scaffoldings which only serve to mark out the plan of a future building. The reason is, that with a high notion of our powers, they had no exact view of their limits. For we are outflanked on all sides by the infinity of time and space; we find ourselves thrown in the midst of this monstrous universe like a shell on the beach, or an ant at the foot of a steep slope. Here Mill is right. Chance is at the end of all our knowledge, as on the threshold of all our postulates: we vainly try to rise, and that by conjecture, to an initial state; but this state depends on the preceding one, which depends on another, and so on; and thus we are forced to accept it as a pure postulate, and to give up the hope of deducing it, though we know that it ought to be deduced. It is so in all sciences, in geology, natural history, physics, chemistry, psychology, history; and the primitive accidental fact extends its effects into all parts of the sphere in which it is comprised. If it had been otherwise, we should have neither the same planets, nor the same chemical compounds, nor the same vegetables, nor the same animals, nor the same races of men, nor, perhaps, any of these kinds of beings. If an ant were taken into another country, it would see neither the same trees, nor insects, nor dispositions of the soil, nor changes of the atmosphere, nor perhaps any of these forms of existence. There is, then, in

every fact and in every object, an accidental and local part, a vast portion, which, like the rest, depends on primitive laws, but not directly, only through an infinite circuit of consequences, in such a way that between it and the primitive laws there is an infinite hiatus, which can only be bridged over by an infinite series of deductions.

Such is the inexplicable part of phenomena, and this is what the German metaphysicians tried to explain. They wished to deduce from their elementary theorems the form of the planetary system, the various laws of physics and chemistry, the main types of life, the progress of human civilisations and thought. They contorted their universal formulæ with the view of deriving from them particular cases; they took indirect and remote consequences as direct and proximate ones; they omitted or suppressed the great work which is interposed between the first laws and the final consequences; they discarded Chance from their construction, as a basis unworthy of science; and the void so left, badly filled up by deceptive materials, caused the whole edifice to fall to ruins.

Does this amount to saying, that in the facts with which this little corner of the universe furnishes us, everything is local? By no means. If an ant were capable of making experiments, it might attain to the idea of a physical law, a living form, a representative sensation, an abstract thought; for a foot of ground, on which there is a thinking brain, includes all these. Therefore, however limited be the field of the mind, it contains general facts; that is, facts spread over very vast external territories, into which its limitation prevents it from penetrating. If the ant were capable of

reasoning, it might construct arithmetic, algebra, geometry, mechanics; for a movement of half an inch contains in the abstract, time, space, number, and force, all the materials of mathematics: therefore, however limited the field of a mind's researches be, it includes universal data; that is, facts spread over the whole region of time and space. Again, if the ant were a philosopher, it might evolve the ideas of existence, of nothingness, and all the materials of metaphysics; for any phenomenon, interior or exterior, suffices to present these materials: therefore, however limited the field of a mind be, it contains absolute truths; that is, such that there is no object from which they could be absent. And this must necessarily be so; for the more general a fact is, the fewer objects need we examine to meet with it. If it is universal, we meet with it everywhere; if it is absolute, we cannot escape meeting it. This is why, in spite of the narrowness of our experience, metaphysics, I mean the search for first causes, is possible, but on condition that we remain at a great height, that we do not descend into details, that we consider only the most simple elements of existence, and the most general tendencies of nature. If any one were to collect the three or four great ideas in which our sciences result, and the three or four kinds of existence which make up our universe; if he were to compare those two strange quantities which we call duration and extension, those principle forms or determinations of quantity which we call physical laws, chemical types, and living species, and that marvellous representative power, the Mind, which, without falling into quantity, reproduces the other two and itself; if he discovered among these three terms—the pure quantity, the determined quan-

tity, and the suppressed quantity¹—such an order that the first must require the second, and the second the third; if he thus established that the pure quantity is the necessary commencement of Nature, and that Thought is the extreme term at which Nature is wholly suspended; if, again, isolating the elements of these data, he showed that they must be combined just as they are combined, and not otherwise: If he proved, moreover, that there are no other elements, and that there can be no other, he would have sketched out a system of metaphysics without encroaching on the positive sciences, and have attained the source without being obliged to descend to trace the various streams.

In my opinion, these two great operations, Experience as you have described it, and Abstraction, as I have tried to define it, comprise in themselves all the resources of the human mind, the one in its practical, the other in its speculative direction. The first leads us to consider nature as an assemblage of facts, the second as a system of laws: the exclusive employment of the first is English; that of the second, German. If there is a place between these two nations, it is ours. We have extended the English ideas in the eighteenth century; and now we can, in the nineteenth, add precision to German ideas. Our business is to restrain, to correct, to complete the two types of mind, one by the other, to combine them together, to express their ideas in a style generally understood, and thus to produce from them the universal mind.

IX.

We went out. As it ever happens in similar cir-

¹ Die aufgehobene Quantität.

cumstances, each had caused the other to reflect, and neither had convinced the other. But our reflections were short : in the presence of a lovely August morning, all arguments fall to the ground. The old walls, the rain-worn stones, smiled in the rising sun. A fresh light rested on their embrasures, on the keystones of the cloisters, on the glossy ivy leaves. Roses and honeysuckles climbed the walls, and their flowers quivered and sparkled in the light breeze. The fountains murmured in the vast lonely courts. The beautiful town stood out from the morning's mist, as adorned and tranquil as a fairy palace, and its robe of soft rosy vapour was indented, as an embroidery of the Renaissance, by a border of towers, cloisters, and palaces, each enclosed in verdure and decked with flowers. The architecture of all ages had mingled their arches, trefoils, statues, and columns ; time had softened their tints ; the sun united them in its light, and the old city seemed a shrine to which every age and every genius had successively added a jewel. Beyond this, the river rolled its broad sheets of silver : the mowers stood up to the knee in the high grass of the meadows. Myriads of buttercups and meadow-sweets ; grasses, bending under the weight of their grey heads, plants sated with the dew of the night, swarmed in the rich soil. Words cannot express this freshness of tints, this luxuriance of vegetation. The more the long line of shade receded, the more brilliant and full of life the flowers appeared. On seeing them, virgin and timid in their gilded veil, I thought of the blushing cheeks and fine modest eyes of a young girl who puts on for the first time her necklace of jewels. Around, as though to guard them, enormous trees, four centuries old, ex-

tended in regular lines ; and I found in them a new trace of that practical good sense which has effected revolutions without committing ravages ; which, while reforming in all directions, has destroyed nothing ; which has preserved both its trees and its constitution, which has lopped off the dead branches without levelling the trunk ; which alone, in our days, among all nations, is in the enjoyment not only of the present, but of the past.

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CHAPTER VI

Poetry.—Tennyson.

I.

WHEN Tennyson published his first poems, the critics found fault with them. He held his peace; for ten years no one saw his name in a review, nor even in a publisher's catalogue. But when he appeared again before the public, his books had made their way alone and under the surface, and he passed at once for the greatest poet of his country and his time.

Men were surprised, and with a pleasing surprise. The potent generation of poets who had just died out, had passed like a whirlwind. Like their forerunners of the sixteenth century, they had carried away and hurried everything to its extreme. Some had culled gigantic legends, piled up dreams, ransacked the East, Greece, Arabia, the Middle Ages, and overloaded the human imagination with hues and fancies from every clime. Others had buried themselves in metaphysics and moral philosophy, had mused indefatigably on the condition of man, and spent their lives on the sublime and the monotonous. Others, making a medley of crime and heroism, had conducted, through darkness and flashes of lightning, a train of contorted and terrible figures, desperate with remorse, relieved by their grandeur. Men wanted to rest after so many efforts and so

much excess. On the going out of the imaginative, sentimental and Satanic school, Tennyson appeared exquisite. All the forms and ideas which had pleased them were found in him, but purified, modulated, set in a splendid style. He completed an age; he enjoyed that which had agitated others; his poetry was like the lovely evenings in summer: the outlines of the landscape are then the same as in the daytime; but the splendour of the dazzling celestial arch is dulled; the re-invigorated flowers lift themselves up, and the calm sun, on the horizon, harmoniously cast a network of crimson rays over the woods and meadows which it just before burned by its brightness.

II.

What first attracted people were Tennyson's portraits of women. Adeline, Eleanore, Lilian, the May Queen, were keepsake characters, from the hand of a lover and an artist. The keepsake is gilt-edged, embossed with flowers and decorations, richly got up, soft, full of delicate faces, always elegant and always correct, which we might take to be sketched at random, and which are yet drawn carefully, on white vellum, slightly touched by their outline, all selected to rest and occupy the soft, white hands of a young bride or a girl. I have translated many ideas and many styles, but I shall not attempt to translate one of these portraits. Each word of them is like a tint, curiously deepened or shaded by the neighbouring tint, with all the boldness and results of the happiest refinement. The least alteration would obscure all. And there an art so just, so consummate, is necessary to paint the charming prettinesses, the sudden hauteurs, the half blushes, the imperceptible and

fleeting caprices of feminine beauty. He opposes, harmonises them, makes of them, as it were, a gallery. Here is the frolicsome child, the little fluttering fairy, who claps her tiny hands, who,

“ So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gather’d wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
Then away she flies.”¹

Then the pensive fair, who dreams, with large open blue eyes :

“ Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro’ in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day.”²

Anew “ the ever varying Madeline,” now smiling, then frowning, then joyful again, then angry, then uncertain between the two :

“ Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed.”³

The poet returned well pleased to all things, refined and exquisite. He caressed them so carefully, that his verses appeared at times far-fetched, affected, almost euphuistic. He gave them too much adornment and

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851 ; *Lilian*, 5.

² *Ibid.* *Adeline*, 33.

³ *Ibid.* *Madeline*, 15.

polishing; he seemed like an epicurean in style, as well as in beauty. He looked for pretty rustic scenes, touching remembrances, curious or pure sentiments. He made them into elegies, pastorals, and idyls. He wrote in every accent, and delighted in entering into the feelings of all ages. He wrote of St. Agnes, St. Simeon Stylites, Ulysses, Enone, Sir Galahad, Lady Clare, Fatima, the Sleeping Beauty. He imitated alternately Homer and Chaucer, Theocritus and Spenser, the old English poets and the old Arabian poets. He gave life successively to the little real events of English life, and the great fantastic adventures of extinguished chivalry. He was like those musicians who use their bow in the service of all masters. He strayed through nature and history, with no foregone conclusions, without fierce passion, bent on feeling, relishing, culling from all parts, in the flower-stand of the drawing-room and in the rustic hedgerows, the rare or wild flowers whose scent or beauty could charm or amuse him. Men entered into his pleasure; smelt the grateful bouquets which he knew so well how to put together; preferred those which he took from the country; found that his talent was nowhere more at ease. They admired the minute observation and refined sentiment which knew how to grasp and interpret the fleeting aspects of things. In the *Dying Swan* they forgot that the subject was almost threadbare, and the interest somewhat slight, that they might appreciate such verses as this

“ Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow."¹

But these melancholy pictures did not display him entirely ; men accompanied him to the land of the sun, toward the soft voluptuousness of southern seas ; they returned, with an involuntary fascination, to the verses in which he depicts the companions of Ulysses, who, slumbering in the land of the Lotos-eaters, happy dreamers like himself, forgot their country, and renounced action :

"A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sun-set flush'd : and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse. . . .

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petal from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851 ; *The Dying Swan*, 45.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep. . .

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil. . . .

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly),
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy.
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine."¹

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851 ; *The Lotus-Eaters*, 140.

III.

Was this charming dreamer simply a dilettante? Men liked to consider him so; he seemed too happy to admit violent passions. Fame came to him easily and quickly, at the age of thirty. The Queen had justified the public favour by creating him Poet Laureate. A great writer declared him a more genuine poet than Lord Byron, and maintained that nothing so perfect had been seen since Shakspeare. The student, at Oxford, put Tennyson's works between an annotated Euripides and a handbook of scholastic philosophy. Young ladies found him amongst their marriage presents. He was said to be rich, venerated by his family, admired by his friends, amiable, without affectation, even unsophisticated. He lived in the country, chiefly in the Isle of Wight, amongst books and flowers, free from the annoyances, rivalries, and burdens of society, and his life was easily imagined to be a beautiful dream, as sweet as those which he had pictured.

Yet the men who looked closer saw that there was a fire of passion under this smooth surface. A genuine poetic temperament never fails in this. It feels too acutely to be at peace. When we quiver at the least touch, we shake and tremble under great shocks. Already here and there, in his pictures of country and love, a brilliant verse broke with its glowing colour through the calm and correct outline. He had felt that strange growth of unknown powers which suddenly arrest a man with fixed gaze before revealed beauty. The specialty of the poet is to be ever young, for ever virgin. For us, the vulgar, things are threadbare; sixty centuries of civilisation have worn out their primitive

freshness ; things have become commonplace ; we perceive them only through a veil of ready-made phrases ; we employ them, we no longer comprehend them ; we see in them no longer magnificent flowers, but good vegetables ; the luxuriant primeval forest is to us nothing but a well-planned, and too well-known, kitchen garden. On the other hand, the poet, in presence of this world, is as the first man on the first day. In a moment our phrases, our reasonings, all the trappings of memory and prejudice, vanish from his mind ; things seem new to him ; he is astonished and ravished ; a headlong stream of sensations oppresses him ; it is the all-potent sap of human invention, which, checked in us, begins to flow in him. Fools call him mad, but in truth he is a seer : for we may indeed be sluggish, but nature is always full of life ; the rising sun is as beautiful as on the first dawn, the streaming floods, the teeming flowers, the trembling passions, the forces which hurl onward the stormy whirlwind of existence, aspire and strive with the same energy as at their birth ; the immortal heart of nature beats yet, heaving its coarse trappings, and its beatings work in the poet's heart when they no longer echo in our own. Tennyson felt this, not indeed always ; but twice or thrice at least he has dared to make it heard. We have found anew the free action of full emotion, and recognised the voice of a man in these verses of *Locksley Hall* :

“ Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one
so young,

And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, ‘ My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.’

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of
sighs—

All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me
wrong ;'

Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved
thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing
hands ;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords
with might ;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out
of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the
Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately
ships,

And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with
clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag
thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its
novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed
with wine.

Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with
my hand !"¹

This is very frank and strong. *Maud* appeared, and was still more so. In it the rapture broke forth with all its inequalities, familiarities, freedom, violence. The correct, measured poet betrayed himself, for he seemed to think and weep aloud. This book is the diary of a gloomy young man, soured by great family misfortunes, by long solitary meditations, who gradually became enamoured, dared to speak, found himself loved. He does not sing, but speaks ; they are the hazarded, reckless words of ordinary conversation ; details of everyday life ; the description of a toilet, a political dinner, a service and sermon in a village church. The prose of Dickens and Thackeray did not more firmly grasp real and actual manners. And by its side, most splendid poetry abounded and blossomed, as in fact it blossoms

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851 ; *Locksley Hall*, 206.

and abounds in the midst of our commonplaces. The smile of a richly dressed girl, a sunbeam on a stormy sea, or on a spray of roses, throws all at once these sudden illuminations into impassioned souls. What verses are these, in which he represents himself in his dark little garden :

“ A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ”¹

What a holiday in his heart when he is loved ! What madness in these cries, that intoxication, that tenderness which would pour itself on all, and summon all to the spectacle and the participation of his happiness ! How all is transfigured in his eyes ; and how constantly he is himself transfigured ! Gaiety, then ecstasy, then archness, then satire, then disclosures, all ready movements, all sudden changes, like a crackling and flaming fire, renewing every moment its shape and colour : how rich is the soul, and how it can live a hundred years in a day ! The hero of the poem, surprised and insulted by the brother of Maud, kills him in a duel, and loses her whom he loved. He flees ; he is seen wandering in London. What a gloomy contrast is that of the great busy careless town, and a solitary man haunted by true grief ! We follow him down the noisy thoroughfares, through the yellow fog, under the wan sun which rises above the river like a “dull red ball,” and we hear the heart full of anguish, deep sobs, insensate agitation

¹ Tennyson's *Maud*, 1856, iv. 1, p. 15.

of a soul which would but cannot tear itself from its memories. Despair grows, and in the end the reverse becomes a vision :

“ Dead, long dead,
Long dead !

And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter.¹ . . .
O me ! why have they not buried me deep enough ?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.”²

However, he revives, and gradually rises again. War breaks out, a liberal and generous war, the war against Russia ; and the big, manly heart, wounded by deep love, is healed by action and courage.

“ And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry . . .
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;

¹ Tennyson's *Maud*, 1856, xxvii. 1, p. 98.

² *Ibid.* xxvii. 11, p. 105.

And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire."¹

This explosion of feeling was the only one ; Tennyson has not again encountered it. In spite of the moral close, men said of *Maud* that he was imitating Byron ; they cried out against these bitter declamations ; they thought that they perceived the rebellious accent of the Satanic school ; they blamed this uneven, obscure, excessive style ; they were shocked at these crudities and incongruities ; they called on the poet to return to his first well-proportioned style. He was discouraged, left the storm-clouds, and returned to the azure sky. He was right ; he is better there than anywhere else. A fine soul may be transported, attain at times to the fire of the most violent and the strongest beings : personal memories, they say, had furnished the matter of *Maud* and of *Locksley Hall* ; with a woman's delicacy, he had the nerves of a woman. The fit over, he fell again into his "golden languors," into his calm reverie. After *Locksley Hall* he wrote the *Princess* ; after *Maud* the *Idylls of the King*.

IV.

The great task of an artist is to find subjects which suit his talent. Tennyson has not always succeeded in this. His long poem, *In Memoriam*, written in

¹ Tennyson's *Maud*, xxviii. 3 and 4, p. 108.

praise and memory of a friend who died young, is cold, monotonous, and too prettily arranged. He goes into mourning; but, like a correct gentleman, with brand new gloves, wipes away his tears with a cambric handkerchief, and displays throughout the religious service, which ends the ceremony, all the compunction of a respectful and well-trained layman. He was to find his subjects elsewhere. To be poetically happy is the object of a dilettante-artist. For this many things are necessary. First of all, that the place, the events, and the characters shall not exist. Realities are coarse, and always, in some sense, ugly; at least they are heavy; we do not treat them as we should like, they oppress the fancy; at bottom there is nothing truly sweet and beautiful in our life but our dreams. We are ill at ease whilst we remain glued to earth, hobbling along on our two feet, which drag us wretchedly here and there in the place which impounds us. We need to live in another world, to hover in the wide-air kingdom, to build palaces in the clouds, to see them rise and crumble, to follow in a hazy distance the whims of their moving architecture, and the turns of their golden volutes. In this fantastic world, again, all must be pleasant and beautiful, the heart and senses must enjoy it, objects must be smiling or picturesque, sentiments delicate or lofty; no crudity, incongruity, brutality, savageness, must come to sully with its excess the modulated harmony of this ideal perfection. This leads the poet to the legends of chivalry. Here is the fantastic world, splendid to the sight, noble and specially pure, in which love, war, adventures, generosity, courtesy, all spectacles and all virtues which suit the instincts of our European races, are assembled, to

furnish them with the epic which they love, and the model which suits them.

The *Princess* is a fairy tale as sentimental as those of Shakspeare. Tennyson here thought and felt like a young knight of the Renaissance. The mark of this kind of mind is a superabundance, as it were, a superfluity of sap. In the characters of the *Princess*, as in those of *As You Like It*, there is an over-fulness of fancy and emotion. They have recourse, to express their thought, to all ages and lands; they carry speech to the most reckless rashness; they clothe and burden every idea with a sparkling image, which drags and glitters around it like a brocade clustered with jewels. Their nature is over-rich; at every shock there is in them a sort of rustle of joy, anger, desire; they live more than we, more warmly and more quickly. They are ever in excess, refined, ready to weep, laugh, adore, jest, inclined to mingle adoration and jests, urged by a nervous rapture to opposite extremes. They sally in the poetic field with impetuous and ever changing caprice and joy. To satisfy the subtlety and superabundance of their invention, they need fairy-tales and masquerades. In fact, the *Princess* is both. The beautiful Ida, daughter of King Gama, who is monarch of the South (this country is not to be found on the map), was affianced in her childhood to a beautiful prince of the North. When the time appointed has arrived, she is claimed. She, proud and bred on learned arguments, has become irritated against the rule of men, and in order to liberate women has founded a university on the frontiers, which is to raise her sex, and to be the colony of future equality. The prince sets out with Cyril and Florian, two friends, obtains

permission from good King Gama, and, disguised as a girl, gets admission to the maiden precincts, which no man may enter on pain of death. There is a charming and sportive grace in this picture of a university for girls. The poet gambols with beauty; no badinage could be more romantic or tender. We smile to hear long learned words come from these rosy lips :

"There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils."¹

They listen to historic dissertations and promises of a social revolution, in "Academic silks, in hue the lilac, with a silken hood to each, and zoned with gold, . . . as rich as moth from dusk cocoons." Amongst these girls was Melissa, a child—

"A rosy blonde, and in a college gown
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's colour), with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seem to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas."²

The site of this university for girls enhances the magic of the scene. The words "College" and "Faculty" bring before the mind of Frenchmen only wretched and dirty buildings, which we might mistake for barracks or boarding-houses. Here, as in an English university, flowers creep up the porches, vines cling round the bases of the monuments, roses strew the alleys with their petals; the laurel thickets grow around the gates, the courts pile up their marble architecture, bossed with

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, 12th ed. 1864, ii. 34.

² *Ibid.* ii. 46.

sculptured friezes, varied with urns from which droops the green pendage of the plants. "The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes, enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst." After the lecture, some girls, in the deep meadow grass, "smoothed a petted peacock down;" others,

"Leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose
Beat balm upon our eyelids."¹

At every gesture, every attitude, we recognise young English girls; it is their brightness, their freshness, their innocence. And here and there, too, we perceive the deep expression of their large dreamy eyes:

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. . . .

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."²

This is an exquisite and strange voluptuousness, a reverie full of delight, and full, too, of anguish, the shudder of delicate and melancholy passion which we have already found in *Winter's Tale* or in *Twelfth Night*.

The three friends have gone forth with the princess

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, 12th ed. 1864, iii. 60. ² *Ibid.* v. 76.

and her train, all on horseback, and pause "near a coppice-feather'd chasm,"

"till the Sun

Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns."

Cyril, heated by wine, begins to troll a careless tavern-catch, and betrays the secret. Ida, indignant, turns to leave; her foot slips, and she falls into the river; the prince saves her, and wishes to flee. But he is seized by the Proctors and brought before the throne, where the haughty maiden stands ready to pronounce sentence. At this moment

"... There rose

A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gather'd together : from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded : high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace."¹

The father of the prince has come with his army to deliver him, and has seized King Gama as a hostage. The princess is obliged to release the young man. With distended nostrils, waving hair, a tempest raging in her heart, she thanks him with bitter irony. She

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, 12th ed. 1864, iv. 92.

trembles with wounded pride ; she stammers, hesitates ; she tries to constrain herself in order the better to insult him, and suddenly breaks out ;

“ ‘ You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :
And you look well too in your woman’s dress :
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
Then men had said—but now—What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both ?—
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
O would I had his sceptre for one hour !
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull’d
Our servants, wronged and lied and thwarted us—
I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave ! not tho’ all the gold
That veins the world were pack’d to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :
I trample on your offers and on you :
Begone : we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates.’ ”¹

How is this fierce heart to be softened, fevered with feminine anger, embittered by disappointment and insult, excited by long dreams of power and ascendancy, and rendered more savage by its virginity ! But how anger becomes her, and how lovely she is ! And how this fire of sentiment, this lofty declaration of independence, this chimerical ambition for reforming the

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, iv. 102.

future, reveal the generosity and pride of a young heart, enamoured of the beautiful! It is agreed that the quarrel shall be settled by a combat of fifty men against fifty other men. The prince is conquered, and Ida sees him bleeding on the sand. Slowly, gradually, in spite of herself, she yields, receives the wounded in her palace, and comes to the bedside of the dying prince. Before his weakness and his wild delirium pity expands, then tenderness, then love :

“ From all a closer interest flourish’d up
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather’d colour day by day.”¹

One evening he returns to consciousness, exhausted, his eyes still troubled by gloomy visions ; he sees Ida before him, hovering like a dream, painfully opens his pale lips, and “ utter’d whisperingly :”

“ ‘ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
Sweet dream be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”
... She turned ; she paused ;
She stoop’d ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;
And I believe that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida’s at the lips ;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, v. 163.

Glowing all over noble shame ; and all
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
 Than in her mould that other, when she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;
 And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave." ¹

This is the accent of the Renaissance, as it left the heart of Spenser and Shakspeare ; they had this voluptuous adoration of form and soul, and this divine sentiment of beauty.

V.

There is another chivalry, which inaugurates the Middle Age, as this closes it ; sung by children, as this by youths ; and restored in the *Idylls of the King*, as this in the *Princess*. It is the legend of Arthur, Merlin and the Knights of the Round Table. With admirable art, Tennyson has modernised the feelings and the language ; this pliant soul takes all tones, in order to give itself all pleasures. This time he has become epic, antique, and ingenuous, like Homer, and like the old *trouvères* of the *chansons de Geste*. It is pleasant to quit our learned civilisation, to rise again to the primitive age and manners, to listen to the peaceful discourse which flows copiously and slowly, as a river in a smooth channel. The distinguishing mark of the ancient epic is clearness and calm. The ideas were new-born ; man was happy and in his infancy. He had not had time to refine, to cut down and adorn his thoughts ; he showed them bare. He was not yet pricked by

¹ *The Princess*, a Medley, v. 165.

manifold lusts; he thought at leisure. Every idea interested him; he unfolded it curiously, and explained it. His speech never jerks; he goes step by step, from one object to another, and every object seems lovely to him: he pauses, observes, and takes pleasure in observing. This simplicity and peace are strange and charming; we abandon ourselves, it is well with us; we do not desire to go more quickly; we fancy we would gladly remain thus, and for ever. For primitive thought is wholesome thought; we have but marred it by grafting and cultivation; we return to it as our familiar element, to find contentment and repose.

But of all epics, this of the Round Table is distinguished by purity. Arthur, the irreproachable king, has assembled

“A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King, . . .
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds.”¹

There is a sort of refined pleasure in having to do with such a world; for there is none in which purer or more touching fruits could grow. I will show one—“Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat”—who, having seen Lancelot once, loves him when he has departed, and for her whole life. She keeps the shield, which he has left in

¹ *Idylls of the King*, 1864; *Guinevere*, 249.

a tower, and every day goes up to look at it, counting "every dint a sword had beaten in it, and every scratch a lance had made upon it," and living on her dreams. He is wounded: she goes to tend and heal him:

"She murmur'd, 'vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?'
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, 'must I die!'"¹

At last she confesses her secret; but with what modesty and spirit! He cannot marry her; he is tied to another. She droops and fades; her father and brothers try to console her, but she will not be consoled. She is told that Lancelot has sinned with the queen; she does not believe it:

"At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yester night
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when you used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it; there you fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because you would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the king.
... Now shall I have my will.'"²

¹ *Idylls of the King*, 1864; *Elaine*, 193.
VOL. IV.

² *Ibid.* 201.
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She dies, and her father and brothers did what she had asked them to do :

" But when the next sun broke from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-brier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blasonings
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her :
' Sister, farewell for ever,' and again
' Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled."¹

Thus they arrive at Court in great silence, and King Arthur read the letter before all his knights and weeping ladies :

" Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,

¹ *Idylls of the King ; Elaine*, 206.

Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
 I loved you, and my love had no return,
 And therefore my true love has been my death.
 And therefore to our lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
 As thou art a knight peerless."¹

Nothing more: she ends with this word, full of so sad a regret and so tender an admiration: we could hardly find anything more simple or more delicate.

It seems as if an archæologist might reproduce all styles except the grand, and Tennyson has reproduced all, even the grand. It is the night of the final battle; all day the tumult of the mighty fray "roll'd among the mountains by the winter sea;" Arthur's knights had fallen "man by man;" he himself had fallen, "deeply smitten through the helm," and Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights, bore him to a place hard by,

"A chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full." ²

Arthur, feeling himself about to die, bids him take his sword Excalibur "and fling him far into the middle meer;" for he had received it from the sea-nymphs, and after him no mortal must handle it. Twice Sir Bedivere went to obey the king: twice he paused, and

¹ *Idylls of the King; Elaine*, 213.

² Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851; *Morte d'Arthur*, 189.

came back pretending that he had flung away the sword; for his eyes were dazzled by the wondrous diamond setting which clustered and shone about the haft. The third time he throws it:

“ The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the meen.”¹

Then Arthur, rising painfully, and scarce able to breathe, bids Sir Bedivere take him on his shoulders and “bear me to the margin.” “Quick, quick! I fear it is too late, and I shall die.” They arrive thus, through “icy caves and barren chasms,” to the shores of a lake, where they saw “the long glories of the winter moon:”

“ They saw then how there hove a dusky barge
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851; *Morte d'Arthur*, 194.

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of the world.
 Then murmur'd Arthur : ' Place me in the barge,'
 And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands
 And call'd him by his name, complaining loud. . . ."¹

Before the barge drifts away, King Arthur, raising his slow voice, consoles Sir Bedivere, standing in sorrow on the shore, and pronounces this heroic and solemn farewell :

" The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world. . . .
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. . . .
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest,—if indeed I go—
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."²

Nothing, I think, calmer and more imposing has been seen since Goethe.

¹ Poems by A. Tennyson, 7th ed. 1851 ; *Morte d'Arthur*, 196.


² *Ibid.* 197.

How, in a few words, shall we assemble all the features of so manifold a talent? Tennyson is a born poet, that is, a builder of airy palaces and imaginary castles. But the individual passion and absorbing pre-occupations which generally guide the hands of such men are wanting to him; he found in himself no plan of a new edifice; he has built after all the rest; he has simply chosen amongst all forms the most elegant, ornate, exquisite. Of their beauties he has taken but the flower. At most, now and then, he has here and there amused himself by designing some genuinely English and modern cottage. If in this choice of architecture, adopted or restored, we look for a trace of him, we shall find it, here and there, in some more finely sculptured frieze, in some more delicate and graceful sculptured rose-work; but we only find it marked and sensible in the purity and elevation of the moral emotion which we carry away with us when we quit his gallery of art.

VI.

The favourite poet of a nation, it seems, is he whose works a man, setting out on a journey, prefers to put into his pocket. Now-a-days it would be Tennyson in England, and Alfred De Musset in France. The two publics differ: so do their modes of life, their reading, and their pleasures. Let us try to describe them; we shall better understand the flowers if we see them in the garden.

Here we are at Newhaven, or at Dover, and we glide over the rails looking on either side. On both sides fly past country houses; they exist everywhere in



England, on the margin of lakes, on the edge of the bays, on the summit of the hills, in every picturesque point of view. They are the chosen abodes; London is but a business-place; men of the world live, amuse themselves, visit each other, in the country. How well ordered and pretty is this house! If near it there was some old edifice, abbey, or castle, it has been preserved. The new building has been suited to the old; even if detached and modern, it does not lack style; gable-ends, mullions, broad-windows, turrets perched at every corner, have a Gothic air in spite of their newness. Even this cottage, though not very large, suited to people with a moderate income, is pleasant to see with its pointed roofs, its porch, its bright brown bricks, all covered with ivy. Doubtless grandeur is generally wanting; in these days the men who mould opinion are no longer great lords, but rich gentlemen, well brought up, and landholders; it is pleasantness which appeals to them. But how they understand the word! All round the house is turf fresh and smooth as velvet, rolled every morning. In front, great rhododendrons form a bright thicket, in which murmur swarms of bees; festoons of exotics creep and curve over the short grass; honeysuckles clamber up the trees; hundreds of roses, drooping over the windows, shed their rain of petals on the paths. Fine elms, yew-trees, great oaks, jealously tended, everywhere combine their leafage or rear their heads. Trees have been brought from Australia and China to adorn the thickets with the elegance or the singularity of their foreign shapes; the copper-beech stretches over the delicate verdure of the meadows the shadow of its dark metallic-hued foliage. How delicious is the freshness of this verdure! How it glistens, and how it

abounds in wild flowers brightened by the sun! What care, what cleanliness, how everything is arranged, kept up, refined, for the comfort of the senses and the pleasure of the eyes! If there is a slope, streamlets have been devised with little islets in the glen, peopled with tufts of roses; ducks of select breed swim in the pools, where the water-lilies display their satin stars. Fat oxen lie in the grass, sheep as white as if fresh from the washing, all kinds of happy and model animals, fit to delight the eyes of an amateur and a master. We return to the house, and before entering I look upon the view; decidedly the love of Englishmen for the country is innate; how pleasant it will be from that parlour window to look upon the setting sun, and the broad network of sunlight spread across the woods! And how cunningly they have disposed the house, so that the landscape may be seen at distance between the hills, and at hand between the trees! We enter. How nicely everything is got up, and how commodious. The smallest wants have been forestalled, and provided for; there is nothing which is not correct and perfect; we imagine that everything in the house has received a prize, or at least an honourable mention, at some industrial exhibition. And the attendance of the servants is as good as everything else; cleanliness is not more scrupulous in Holland; Englishmen have, in proportion, three times as many servants as Frenchmen; not too many for the minute details of the service. The domestic machine acts without interruption, without shock, without hindrance; every wheel has its movement and its place, and the comfort which it dispenses falls like honey in the mouth, as clear and as exquisite as the sugar of a model refinery when quite purified.

We converse with our host. We very soon find that his mind and soul have always been well balanced. When he left college he found his career shaped out for him; no need for him to revolt against the Church, which is half rational; nor against the Constitution, which is nobly liberal: the faith and law presented to him are good, useful, moral, liberal enough to maintain and employ all diversities of sincere minds. He became attached to them, he loves them, he has received from them the whole system of his practical and speculative ideas; he does not waver, he no longer doubts, he knows what he ought to believe and to do. He is not carried away by theories, dulled by sloth, checked by contradictions. Elsewhere youth is like water, stagnant or running to waste; here there is a fine old channel which receives and directs to a useful and sure end the whole stream of its activities and passions. He acts, works, rules. He is married, has tenants, is a magistrate, becomes a politician. He improves and rules his parish, his estate, and his family. He founds societies, speaks at meetings, superintends schools, dispenses justice, introduces improvements; he employs his reading, his travels, his connections, his fortune, and his rank, to lead his neighbours and dependants amicably to some work which profits themselves and the public. He is influential and respected. He has the pleasures of self-esteem and the satisfaction of conscience. He knows that he has authority, and that he uses it loyally, for the good of others. And this healthy state of mind is supported by a wholesome life. His mind is beyond doubt cultivated and occupied; he is well-informed, knows several languages, has travelled, is fond of all precise information; he is kept by his newspapers

conversant with all new ideas and discoveries. But, at the same time, he loves and practises all bodily exercises. He rides, takes long walks, hunts, yachts, examines for himself all the details of breeding and agriculture; he lives in the open air, he withstands the encroachments of a sedentary life, which always elsewhere leads the modern man to agitation of the brain, weakness of the muscles, and excitement of the nerves. Such is this elegant and common-sense society, refined in comfort, regular in conduct, whose dilettante tastes and moral principles confine it within a sort of flowery border, and prevent it from having its attention diverted.

Does any poet suit such a society better than Tennyson? Without being a pedant, he is moral; he may be read in the family circle by night; he does not rebel against society and life; he speaks of God and the soul, nobly, tenderly, without ecclesiastical prejudice; there is no need to reproach him like Lord Byron; he has no violent and abrupt words, extravagant and scandalous sentiments; he will pervert nobody. We shall not be troubled when we close the book; we may listen when we quit him, without being shocked by the contrast, to the grave voice of the master of the house, who reads evening prayers before the kneeling servants. And yet, when we quit him, we keep a smile of pleasure on our lips. The traveller, the lover of archæology, has been pleased by the imitations of foreign and antique sentiments. The sportsman, the lover of the country, has relished the little country scenes and the rich rural pictures. The ladies have been charmed by his portraits of women; they are so exquisite and pure! He has laid such delicate blushes on those lovely cheeks! He has depicted so well the

hanging expression of those proud or candid eyes! They like him because they feel that he likes them. He even honours them, and rises in his nobility to the height of their purity. Young girls weep in listening to him; certainly when, a little while ago, we heard the legend of *Elaine* or *Enid* read, we saw the fair heads drooping under the flowers which adorned them, and white shoulders heaving with furtive emotion. And how delicate was this emotion! He has not rudely renched upon truth and passion. He has risen to the height of noble and tender sentiments. He has gleaned from all nature and all history what was most lofty and miabile. He has chosen his ideas, chiselled his words, qualled by his artifices, successes, and versatility of style, the pleasantness and perfection of social elegance in the midst of which we read him. His poetry is like one of those gilt and painted stands in which flowers of the country and exotics mingle in artful harmony with their stalks and foliage, their clusters and cups, their cents and hues. It seems made expressly for these wealthy, cultivated, free business men, heirs of the ancient nobility, new leaders of a new England. It is part of their luxury as well as of their morality; it is an eloquent confirmation of their principles, and a precious article of their drawing-room furniture.

We return to Calais, and travel towards Paris, without pausing on the road. There are on the way plenty of noblemen's castles, and houses of rich men of business. But we do not find amongst them, as in England, the thinking elegant world, which, by the refinement of its taste and the superiority of its mind, becomes the guide of the nation and the arbiter of the beautiful. There are two peoples in France: the provinces and

Paris; the one dining, sleeping, yawning, listening; the other thinking, daring, watching, and speaking: the first drawn by the second, as a snail by a butterfly, alternately amused and disturbed by the whims and the audacity of its guide. It is this guide we must look upon! Let us enter Paris! What a strange spectacle! It is evening, the streets are aflame, a luminous dust covers the busy noisy crowd, which jostles, elbows, crushes, and swarms near the theatres, behind the windows of the cafés. Have you remarked how all these faces are wrinkled, frowning or pale; how anxious are their looks, how nervous their gestures? A violent brightness falls on these shining heads; most are bald before thirty. To find pleasure here, they must have plenty of excitement: the dust of the boulevard settles on the ice which they are eating; the smell of the gas and the steam of the pavement, the perspiration left on the walls dried up by the fever of a Parisian day, "the human air full of impure rattle"—this is what they cheerfully breathe. They are crammed round their little marble tables, persecuted by the glaring light, the shouts of the waiters, the jumble of mixed talk, the monotonous motion of gloomy walkers, the flutter of loitering courtesans moving about anxiously in the dark. Doubtless their homes are not pleasant, or they would not change them for these bagmen's delights. We climb four flights of stairs, and find ourselves in a polished, gilded room, adorned with stuccoed ornaments, plaster statuettes, new furniture of old oak, with every kind of pretty nick-nack on the mantelpieces and the whatnots. "It makes a good show;" you can give a good reception to envious friends and people of standing. It is an advertisement, nothing more; we pass half-an-hour

there agreeably, and that is all. You will never make more than a house of call out of these rooms; they are low in the ceiling, close, inconvenient, rented by the year, dirty in six months, serving to display a fictitious luxury. All the enjoyments of these people are factitious, and, as it were, snatched hurriedly; they have in them something unhealthy and irritating. They are like the cookery of their restaurants, the splendour of their cafés, the gaiety of their theatres. They want them too quick, too pungent, too manifold. They have not cultivated them patiently, and culled them moderately; they have forced them on an artificial and heating soil; they grasp them in haste. They are refined and greedy; they need every day a stock of word-paintings, broad anecdotes, biting railleries, new truths, varied ideas. They soon get bored, and cannot endure tedium. They amuse themselves with all their might, and find that they are hardly amused. They exaggerate their work and their expense, their wants and their efforts. The accumulation of sensations and fatigue stretches their nervous machine to excess, and their polish of social gaiety chips off twenty times a day, displaying an inner ground of suffering and ardour.

But how quick-witted they are, and how unfettered is their mind! How this incessant rubbing has sharpened them! How ready they are to grasp and comprehend everything! How apt this studied and manifold culture has made them to feel and relish tendernesses and sadnesses, unknown to their fathers, deep feelings, strange and sublime, which hitherto seemed foreign to their race! This great city is cosmopolitan; here all ideas may be born; no barrier checks the mind: the vast field of thought opens before them without a

beaten or prescribed track. Use neither hinders nor guides them; an official Government and Church rid them of the care of leading the nation: the two powers are submitted to, as we submit to the beadle or the policeman, patiently and with chaff; they are looked upon as a play. In short, the world here seems but a melodrama, a subject of criticism and argument. And be sure that criticism and argument have full scope. An Englishman entering on life, finds to all great questions an answer ready made. A Frenchman entering on life finds to all great questions simply suggested doubts. In this conflict of opinions he must create a faith for himself, and, being mostly unable to do it, he remains open to every uncertainty, and therefore to every curiosity and to every pain. In this gulf, which is like a vast sea, dreams, theories, fancies, intemperate, poetic and sickly desires, collect and chase each other like clouds. If in this tumult of moving forms we seek some solid work to prepare a foundation for future opinions, we find only the slowly-rising edifices of the sciences, which here and there obscurely, like submarine polypes, construct of imperceptible coral the basis on which the belief of the human race is to rest.

Such is the world for which Alfred de Musset wrote: in Paris he must be read. Read? We all know him by heart. He is dead, and it seems as if we daily hear him speak. A conversation among artists, as they jest in a studio, a beautiful young girl leaning over her box at the theatre, a street washed by the rain, making the black pavement shine, a fresh smiling morning in the woods of Fontainebleau, everything brings him before us, as if he were alive again. Was there ever a more vibrating and genuine accent? This man, at least, never

lied. He only said what he felt, and he has said it as he felt it. He thought aloud. He made the confession of every man. He was not admired, but loved; he was more than a poet, he was a man. Every one found in him his own feelings, the most transient, the most familiar; he did not restrict himself, he gave himself to all; he possessed the last virtues which remain to us, generosity and sincerity. And he had the most precious gift which can seduce an old civilisation, youth. As he said, "that hot youth, a tree with a rough bark, which covers all with its shadow, prospect and path." With what fire did he hurl onward love, jealousy, the thirst of pleasure, all the impetuous passions which rise with virgin blood from the depths of a young heart, and how did he make them clash together! Has any one felt them more deeply? He was too full of them, he gave himself up to them, was intoxicated with them. He rushed through life, like an eager racehorse in the country, whom the scent of plants and the splendid novelty of the vast heavens urge, headlong, in its mad career, which shatters all before him, and himself as well. He desired too much; he wished strongly and greedily to enjoy life in one draught, thoroughly; he did not glean or enjoy it; he tore it off like a bunch of grapes, pressed it, crushed it, twisted it; and he remains with stained hands as thirsty as before.¹ Then broke forth sobs which found an echo in all hearts. What! so young, and already so wearied! So many precious gifts, so fine a mind, so delicate a tact, so rich and

¹ "O médiocrité! celui qui pour tout bien
T'apporte à ce tripot dégoûtant de la vie
Est bien poltron au jeu s'il ne dit: Tout ou rien."

varied a fancy, so precocious a glory, such a sudden blossom of beauty and genius, and yet anguish, disgust, tears, and cries! What a mixture! With the same attitude he adores and curses. Eternal illusion, invincible experience, keep side by side in him to fight and tear him. He became old, and remained young; he is a poet, and he is a sceptic. The Muse and her peaceful beauty, Nature and her immortal freshness, Love and his happy smile, all the swarm of divine visions barely passed before his eyes, when we see approaching with curses, and sarcasms, all the spectres of debauchery and death. He is as a man in a festive scene, who drinks from a chased cup, standing up, in front, amidst applause and triumphal music, his eyes laughing, his heart full of joy, heated and excited by the generous wine he quaffed, whom suddenly we see growing pale; there was poison in the cup; he falls, and the death-rattle is in his throat; his convulsed feet beat upon the silken carpet, and all the terrified guests look on. This is what we felt on the day when the most beloved, the most brilliant amongst us, suddenly quivered from an unseen attack, and was struck down, being hardly able to breathe, amid the lying splendours and gaieties of our banquet.

Well! such as he was, we love him for ever: we cannot listen to another; beside him, all seem cold or false. We leave at midnight the theatre in which he had heard Malibran, and we enter the gloomy *rue des Moulins*, where, on a hired bed, his Rolla¹ came to sleep and die. The lamps cast flickering rays on the slippery pavement. Restless shadows march past the doors, and trail along their dress of dragged silk to

¹ See vol. i. p. 237, n. 1.

meet the passers-by. The windows are fastened; here and there a light pierces through a half closed shutter, and shows a dead dahlia on the edge of a window-sill. To-morrow an organ will grind before these panes, and the wan clouds will leave their droppings on these dirty walls. From this wretched place came the most impassioned of his poems! These vilenesses and vulgarities of the stews and the lodging-house caused this divine eloquence to flow! it was these which at such a moment gathered in this bruised heart all the splendours of nature and history, to make them spring up in sparkling jets, and shine under the most glowing poetic sun that ever rose! We feel pity; we think of that other poet, away there in the Isle of Wight, who amuses himself by dressing up lost epics. How happy he is amongst his fine books, his friends, his honeysuckles and roses! No matter. De Musset, in this wretched abode of filth and misery, rose higher. From the heights of his doubt and despair, he saw the infinite, as we see the sea from a storm-beaten promontory. Religions, their glory and their decay, the human race, its pangs and its destiny, all that is sublime in the world, appeared there to him in a flash of lightning. He felt, at least this once in his life, the inner tempest of deep sensations, giant-dreams, and intense voluptuousness, the desire of which enabled him to live, the lack of which forced him to die. He was no mere dilettante; he was not content to taste and enjoy; he left his mark on human thought; he told the world what was man, love, truth, happiness. He suffered, but he imagined; he fainted, but he created. He tore from his entrails with despair the idea which he had conceived, and showed it to the eyes

of all, bloody but alive. That is harder and lovelier than to go fondling and gazing upon the ideas of others. There is in the world but one work worthy of a man, the production of a truth, to which we devote ourselves, and in which we believe. The people who have listened to Tennyson are better than our aristocracy of townsfolk and bohemians; but I prefer Alfred de Musset to Tennyson.



INDEX.

- ABELLARD**, i. 214, 217.
Addison, Joseph, iii. 63, 100, 112, 127; his life and writings, 150-197, 438, 454; iv. 216, 234, 245 *seq.*, 283.
Adhelm, i. 83, 90, 91, 250.
Agriculture, improvement in, in sixteenth century, i. 232; in the nineteenth, iii. 382; iv. 94 *seq.*
Akenside, Mark, iii. 376.
Alcuin, i. 83, 91.
Alexander VI., Pope, ii. 145.
Alexandrian philosophy, i. 29.
Alfred the Great, i. 83, 89.
Alison, Sir Archibald, iii. 382.
Amory, Thomas, iii. 308.
Angelo, Michael, i. 247; ii. 67; iii. 364.
Anglo-Saxon poetry, i. 66 *seq.*
Ann of Cleves, i. 251.
Anselm, i. 99.
Anthology, the, i. 232, 325.
Arbuthnot, Dr. John, iii. 227.
Architecture, Norman, i. 98, 172; the Tudor style, 235.
Ariosto, i. 250, 300; iii. 22.
Aristocracy, British, in the nineteenth century, iv. 96 *seq.*
Arkwright, Sir Richard, iii. 141.
Armada, the, i. 232, 380.
Arnold, Dr. Thomas, iii. 461; iv. 108.
Arthur and Merlin, romance of, i. 100.
Ascham, Roger, i. 244, 334; ii. 143.
Athelstan, i. 46, 69.
Augier, Emile, iv. 145.
Austen, Jane, iii. 441.
BACON, Francis, Lord, i. 333, 348-358; ii. 187, 193; iv. 229 *seq.* 251.
Bacon, Roger, i. 217.
Bain, Alexander, iv. 114.
Bakewell, Robert, iii. 141.
Bale, John, i. 250.
Balzac, Honoré de, i. 4; iv. 155, 209.
Barclay, Alexander, i. 223.
Barclay, John, iii. 100.
Barclay, Robert, ii. 221.
Barrow, Isaac, iii. 99, 104 *seq.*
Barter, Richard, i. 364; ii. 218; iii. 100.
Bayly's (Lewis) Practice of Piety, ii. 227.
Beattie, James, iii. 310, 377.
Beauclerk, Henry, i. 99.
Beaumont, Francis, i. 397, 420-433; ii. 196, 203, 280.
Becket, Thomas à, i. 129.
Beckford, W., iii. 429.
Bede, the Venerable, i. 83.
Bedford, Duke of (John Russell), iii. 126.
Beethoven, Lewis van, iii. 443.
Behn, Mrs. Aphra, ii. 357; iii. 47.
Bell, Currer. *See* Brontë, Charlotte.
Benoît de Sainte Maure, i. 100.
Bentham, Jeremy, iii. 141; iv. 233.
Bentley, Richard, iii. 115, 116.
Beowulf, an Anglo-Saxon epic poem, i. 62-67.
Béranger, ii. 153; iv. 255.
Bergmann's translations of Icelandic legends, i. 52.
Berkeley, Bishop, iii. 115.

- Berkley, Sir Charles, ii. 333.
 Berners, Lord, i. 251.
 Best, Paul, ii. 209.
 Bible, English. *See* Wiclif, Tyndale.
 Bilney, Thomas, martyrdom of, ii. 177.
 Blackmore, Sir Richard, iii. 6.
 Blount, Edward, i. 259.
 Boccaccio, i. 171, 178; iii. 62, 63.
 Bodley, Sir Thomas, i. 334.
 Boethius, i. 83-87.
 Boileau, ii. 338, 394; iii. 4, 59, 89, 335, 345; iv. 337.
 Boleyn, Ann, i. 251, 376.
 Bolingbroke, Lord (Henry St. John), iii. 76, 80, 81, 115, 337; iv. 216.
 Bonner, Edmund, ii. 185.
 Borde, Andrew, i. 250.
 Borgia, Caesar, ii. 145, 146.
 Borgia, Lucretia, i. 246; ii. 146.
 Bossu (or Lebossu), iii. 4, 179, 187.
 Bossuet, i. 24; iii. 17, 360; iv. 283.
 Boswell, James, iii. 316 *seq.*
 Bouchier. *See* Berners.
 Boyle, the Hon. Robert, iii. 115.
 Bridaine, Father, iii. 103.
 Britons, ancient, i. 46, 47.
 Brontë, Charlotte (Currer Bell), iii. 441, 462; iv. 113.
 Browne, Sir Thomas, i. 333, 335, 343-347; ii. 187, 193.
 Browning, Mrs., iii. 462; iv. 114.
 Brunanburh, Athelstan's victory at, celebrated in Saxon song, i. 69.
 Buckingham, 2d Duke of (George Villiers), ii. 335, 350, 389; iii. 5.
 Buckinghamshire, Duke of (John Sheffield), ii. 394.
 Buckle, Henry Thomas, iv. 75 *seq.*, 105.
 Bulwer, iii. 441; iv. 113.
 Bunyan, John, ii. 221-238, 322.
 Burke, Edmund, iii. 115, 136-149, 316; iv. 254, 283.
 Burleigh, Lord (William Cecil), i. 372; iv. 256, 257.
 Burnet, Bishop, iii. 100.
 Burney, Francisca (Madame D'Arblay), iii. 87, 140, 316; iv. 239.
 Burns, Robert, iii. 43; sketch of his life and works, 389-412.
 Burton, Robert, i. 235, 336-342; ii. 187, 280.
 Busby, Dr. Richard, iii. 50.
 Buta, Lord, iii. 74 *seq.*, 126.
 Butler, Bishop, iii. 141.
 Butler, Samuel, ii. 328-332; iii. 116.
 Byng, Admiral, iii. 73, 125.
 Byron, Lord, iii. 341; his life and works, iv. 1-69.
 Cædmon, hymns of, i. 74, 79; his metrical paraphrase of parts of the Bible, 79-82, 250.
 Calamy, Edmund, ii. 221.
 Calderon, i. 218, 380; ii. 1, 354.
 Calvin, John, ii. 154, 203; iii. 118.
 Camden, William, i. 384.
 Campbell, Thomas, iii. 427; iv. 16.
 Carew, Thomas, i. 323.
 Carey, Mr., iii. 429.
 Carlyle, Thomas, i. 8; iii. 462; iv. 105, 113; style and mind, 285 *seq.*; vocation, 312 *seq.*; philosophy, morality, and criticism, 323 *seq.*; conception of history, 338.
 Carteret, John (Earl Granville), iii. 127.
 Castlereagh, Lord, ii. 2.
 Catherine, St., play of, i. 100.
 Cellini, Benvenuto, i. 34, 153, 248.
 Cervantes, i. 134, 203, 300; iii. 268.
 Chalmers, George, i. 94.
 Chandos, Duke of (John Brydges), iii. 337.
 Chapman, George, ii. 4.
 Charles of Orléans, i. 111, 213.
 Charles I. of England, iv. 239.
 Charles II. and his court, ii. 332 *seq.*
 Chateaubriand, i. 6; iii. 177.
 Chatham. *See* Pitt.
 Chaucer, i. 141-143, 170, 212; iii. 63, 64.
 Chesterfield, Lord, iii. 80 *seq.*, 316, 347.
 Chevy Chase, ballad of, i. 168.
 Chillingworth, William, i. 303; ii. 189, 192; iii. 112.
 Christianity, introduction of, into Britain, i. 72, 82.
 Chroniclers, French, i. 110.
 Chronicles, Saxon, i. 88.

- Cibber, Colley, iii. 337, 350.
 Cimbrians, the, i. 50.
 Clarendon, Lord Chancellor (Edward Hyde), i. 333; ii. 332.
 Clarke, Dr. John, iii. 95, 113.
 Classic spirit in Europe, its origin and nature, ii. 372-378.
 Classical authors translated, i. 243, 257.
 Clive, Lord, iv. 233.
 Coleridge, Hartley, i. 381.
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, iii. 422 *seq.*
 Collier, Jeremy, iii. 6, 50, 51.
 Collins, William, iii. 337.
 Colman, George, ii. 446.
 Comedy-writers, English, ii. 399 *seq.*
 Comines, Philippe de, i. 168.
 Commerce in sixteenth century, i. 232; iv. 88 *seq.*
 Comte, Auguste, iv. 361.
 Condillac, Stephen-Bonnot de, iv. 320, 361.
 Congreve, William, ii. 399, 412, 420-430; iii. 87.
 Conybeare, J. J., i. 69 *seq.*
 Corbet, Bishop, ii. 189.
 Corneille, i. 21; iii. 4, 21.
 Cotton, Sir Robert, i. 334.
 Court pageantries in the sixteenth century, i. 236, 237.
 Coventry, Sir John, ii. 334.
 Coverdale, Miles, ii. 167.
 Cowley, Abraham, i. 323-330; ii. 186, 239.
 Cowper, William, iii. 414-422.
 Crabbe, George, iii. 420; iv. 16.
 Cranmer, Archbishop, ii. 159, 171.
 Crashaw, Richard, ii. 186.
 Criticism and History, iv. 227 *seq.*
 Cromwell, Oliver, i. 8; ii. 188, 210; iv. 240, 301, 345.
 Crowne, John, ii. 357.
 Curl, Edmund, iii. 350.
 DANIEL, Samuel, i. 334.
 Dante, i. 182, 213, 217; ii. 295; iv. 322.
 Darwin, Charles, i. 13.
 Davie, Adam, i. 124.
 Davies, Sir John, ii. 186.
 Daye, John, ii. 206.
 Decker, Thomas, i. 383.
 De Foe, iii. 121, 255-268; iv. 96.
 Delille, James, iii. 355.
 Denham, Sir John, ii. 395-398.
 Denmark, i. 38, 42.
 Dennis, John, iii. 156.
 Descartes, ii. 346; iii. 17; iv. 320.
 Dickens, Charles, iii. 441, 462; his novels, iv. 115-164.
 Domesday Book, i. 93, 102, 139.
 Donne, John, i. 326, 327; ii. 189.
 Dorat, C. J., iii. 348; iv. 55.
 Dorset, Earl of (Charles Sackville), ii. 388, 389.
 Drake, Admiral, i. 232.
 Drake, Dr. Nathan, i. 232, 233, 369.
 Drama, formation of the, i. 397 *seq.*
 Drayton, Michael, i. 276 *seq.*, 287; ii. 186.
 Drummond, William, ii. 280.
 Dryden, John, i. 24; ii. 279; his comedies, ii. 350-356, 394; his life and writings, iii. 2-72, 157, 334; iv. 314.
 Dudevant, Madame (George Sand), iv. 144.
 Dunstan, St., i. 45 *seq.*
 Durer, Albert, ii. 150-153.
 Dyer, Sir Edward, i. 274.
 EARLE, John, i. 334.
 Eddas, the Scandinavian, i. 52-53; iv. 31.
 Edgeworth, Maria, iv. 207.
 Edward VI., ii. 178.
 Edwy and Elgiva, story of, i. 47, 48.
 Eliot, George. *See* Evans, Mary A.
 England, climate of, i. 40.
 English Constitution, formation of the, i. 140, 141.
 Elizabeth, Queen, i. 234-240, 332, 368.
 Elwin, Rev. Whitwell, iii. 332, 341 *seq.*
 Erigena, John Scotus, i. 83, 89.
 Esmeinard, Joseph Alphonse, i. 221.
 Essex, Robert, Earl of, i. 363, 369, 372.
 Etherege, Sir George, ii. 357, 399.

- Evans, Mary A. (George Eliot), iii. 441 ; iv. 109, 113.
 Eyck, Van, i. 203.
- FAKELAND, Lord, i. 333.
 Farnese, Pietro Luigi, ii. 146.
 Farquhar, George, ii. 399, 400, 429, 432.
 Faust, iii. 387.
 Featley, Dr., ii. 213.
 Feltham, Owen, i. 334.
 Fenn, Sir John, i. 231.
 Ferguson, Dr. Adam, iii. 118 ; iv. 233.
 Fernor, Mrs. Arabella, iii. 347, 348.
 Feudalism, the formation and character of, i. 95.
 Fichte, iv. 322.
 Fielding, Henry, ii. 3, 325 ; iii. 289-300, 325.
 Filmer, Sir Robert, iii. 119.
 Finsborough, Battle of, an Anglo-Saxon poem, i. 69.
 Fisher, John, Bishop of Rochester, i. 375 ; ii. 175, 176.
 Flemish artists, i. 229, 239.
 Fletcher, Giles, ii. 186.
 Fletcher, John, i. 397, 420-424, 428-432 ; ii. 196, 203, 280.
 Ford, John, i. 397, 406 *seq.*, 425-427 ; iii. 38.
 Fortescue, Sir John, i. 151 *seq.*
 Fox, Charles James, iii. 127, 134 *seq.*
 Fox, Henry (1st Lord Holland), iii. 77 *seq.*
 Fox, George, ii. 213, 221, 322.
 Fox, John, ii. 157, 163 *seq.*
 Francis of Assisi, i. 218.
 Freeman, Edward A., i. 96.
 Frisians, the, i. 88, 39.
 Froissart, i. 110, 186, 171, 174, 178.
 Froude, J. A., i. 189 ; ii. 159 *seq.*
 Fuller, Thomas, ii. 2.
- GAIMAR, Geoffroy, i. 100, 122.
 Gainsborough, Thomas, landscape painter, ii. 446.
 Garrick, David, iii. 316, 321.
 Gaskell, Mrs. Elizabeth C., iii. 441 ; iv. 113.
- Gay, John, ii. 433 ; iii. 81, 82, 361, 367-369.
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, i. 123, 181.
 German ideas, introduction of, in Europe and England, iv. 312 *seq.*
 Germany, drinking habits in, ii. 143, 149.
 Gibbon, Edward, iii. 316.
 Gladstone, William Ewart, iv. 237.
 Glencoe, massacre of, iv. 276 *seq.*
 Glover, Richard, iii. 377.
 Godwin, William, iii. 454.
 Godwin, Mrs. William. *See* Wolstonecraft, Mary.
 Goethe, i. 7, 24 ; ii. 295, 304 ; iii. 296, 387, 388, 425 ; iv. 34-42, 313 *seq.*
 Goldsmith, Oliver, ii. 433 ; iii. 122, 310-316.
 Goltzius, i. 265.
 Gower, John, i. 119, 220.
 Grammont, Count de, ii. 325, 373, 374.
 Gray, Thomas, iii. 376.
 Greene, Robert, i. 278, 279, 283, 284, 332, 383-385 ; ii. 65.
 Grenville, George, iii. 126.
 Gresset, J. B. Lewis, iii. 348.
 Grey, Lady Jane, i. 243, 368.
 Grostête, Robert, i. 119, 124.
 Grote, George, iv. 113.
 Guicciardini, Ludovic, i. 232.
 Guido, i. 22.
 Guizot, i. 1, 144 ; iv. 239, 248, 262.
 Guy of Warwick, i. 100.
- HABINGTON, William, i. 326.
 Hackluyt, Richard, i. 334.
 Hale, Sir Matthew, ii. 161.
 Hales, John, i. 333 ; ii. 189, 191, 192 ; iii. 113.
 Halifax, Charles Montague, Earl of, iii. 153, 160, 200, 206.
 Hall, Bishop Joseph, i. 334 ; ii. 188.
 Hallam, Henry, i. 158 ; iv. 240.
 Hamilton, Anthony, ii. 325 *seq.*
 Hamilton, Sir William, iv. 114.
 Hampden, John, iv. 239.
 Hampole, i. 124.
 Hardyng, John, i. 366.
 Harrington, Sir John, i. 322.

- m, William, i. 233 *seq.*; iv.
 , David, iv. 365.
 n, Warren, iii. 135; iv. 233,
seq., 260.
 Stephen, i. 223.
 i. 24, 29, 215; iv. 233, 317
 i. 3, 39; ii. 59; iii. 380, 388,
 443.
 g, Hans, i. 229.
 Beauclerk, i. 99.
 of Huntingdon, i. 48, 100.
 VIII. and his Court, i. 367,
 ii. 159.
 t, George, i. 326.
 t, Lord, i. 333.
 John Godfrey von, i. 8.
 , Robert, i. 323, 324.
 s, Sir John, iv. 390, 399.
 d, Earl of, i. 368.
 , Lord, iii. 362.
 d, Mrs. Eliza, iii. 351.
 d, John, i. 250, 381.
 , Ralph, i. 118.
 aron, iii. 337.
 , philosophy of. *See the In-*
action, passim.
 , Thomas, ii. 342-350; iii.
 55, 399.
 i, William, iii. 324-329.
 ed's Chronicles, i. 236, 237,
 375.
 t, Lord. *See* Fox, Henry.
 t, i. 37 *seq.*
 and Spenser, i. 294.
 Richard, i. 333; ii. 189 *seq.*
 King, romance of, i. 100, 134.
 n, John, i. 119.
 , John, iii. 141.
 , Sir Robert, iii. 27.
 John, iv. 272.
 Victor, i. 3, 224; iii. 69, 424,
 David, iii. 117, 310; iv.
 346, 361, 399.
 William, martyrdom of, ii.
 184.
 ion, Francis, iii. 118, 141;
 3.
 ion, Col. John, iv. 343.
- IOWLAND and its legends, i. 43, 52.
 Independency in the sixteenth cen-
 tury, ii. 209 *seq.*, 265.
 Industry, British, in the nineteenth
 century, iv. 90 *seq.*
 Irish, the ancient, i. 46.
 Italian writings and ideas, taste for,
 in sixteenth century, i. 244; vices
 of the Italian Renaissance, ii. 142-
 143.
 JAMES I. and his Court, i. 321 *seq.*
 James II., iv. 249.
 Jewell, Bishop, i. 377.
 Johnson, Samuel, ii. 3; iii. 115, 141,
 316-329, 339-341, 379; iv. 337.
 Joinville, Sire de, i. 110.
 Jones, Inigo, i. 235; ii. 5.
 Jones, Sir William, iii. 316.
 Jonson, Ben, i. 281, 361, 381, 382;
 ii. 2, 3, 230; iv. 75; sketch of
 his life, ii. 1-5; his learning, style,
 etc., 6-14; his dramas, 14-21;
 his comedies, 21-38; compared
 with Molière, 37; fanciful come-
 dies and smaller poems, 38-45.
 Jordaens, Jacob, i. 233.
 Jowett, Benjamin, iii. 462; iv. 321.
 Judith, poem of, i. 77-79.
 Junius, Francis, i. 81.
 Junius, Letters of, iii. 127 *seq.*; iv. 7.
 Jutes, the, and their country, i. 38
seq.
 KEATS, John, iv. 41.
 Kemble, John M., i. 45, 62 *seq.*
 Knighton, Henry, i. 166.
 Knolles, Richard, i. 334.
 Knox, John, ii. 148, 177; iv. 349.
 Kyd, Thomas, i. 382.
 LACKLAND, John, i. 136.
 La Harpe, iv. 337.
 Laing, David, ii. 3.
 Lamartine, i. 3; iii. 425, 443.
 Lamb, Charles, iii. 423, 427.
 Laneham, Robert, i. 233.
 Lanfranc, first Norman Archbishop
 of Canterbury, i. 99.
 Langtoft, Peter, i. 119.

- Langust, Hubert, i. 262.
 Latimer, Bishop, i. 145; ii. 162, 176 *seq.*
 Laud, Archbishop, ii. 198; iv. 256.
 Lavergne, Léonce de, i. 40.
 Law, William, iii. 116.
 Layamon, i. 128.
 Leboeuf. *See* Bossu.
 Lebrun, Ponce Denis Ecouchard, i. 221.
 Lee, Nathaniel, iii. 28.
 Leibnitz, iii. 358.
 Leighton, Dr. Alexander, ii. 208, 264.
 Lely, Sir Peter, iii. 140.
 Leo X., Pope, ii. 144.
 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, i. 6.
 Lingard, Dr. John, i. 42, 43.
 Locke, John, ii. 239; iii. 112, 116 *seq.*, 141; iv. 251, 361, 365.
 Lockhart, John Gibson, iii. 431 *seq.*
 Lodge, Thomas, i. 276, 381.
 Lombard, Peter, i. 212, 216.
 Loménie de Brienne, Cardinal, iv. 290.
 London in Henry VIII.'s time, i. 233; in the present day, iv. 89 *seq.*
 Longchamps, William, i. 129.
 Longus, Greek romance writer, i. 282.
 Lorrain, Guillaume de, i. 111, 127.
 Loyola, i. 218, 230; iv. 236.
 Ludlow, Edmund, ii. 310.
 Lulli, a renowned Italian composer, iii. 16.
 Lully, Raymond, i. 218.
 Luther, Martin, i. 34, 280; ii. 142-145, 148.
 Lydgate, John, Abbot of St. Alban's, i. 221-224.
 Lyly, John, i. 259.
 Lyly, William, i. 243.
 MACAULAY, Thomas Babington (Lord), iii. 461; his works, iv. 227-284.
 Machiavelli, i. 246.
 Mackenzie, Henry, iii. 375, 392.
 Mackintosh, Sir James, iv. 240.
 Macpherson, James, iii. 375, 376.
 Malcolm, Sir John, iii. 429.
 Malherbe, Francis de, iv. 314.
 Malte-Brun, Conrad, i. 38.
 Mandeville, Bernard, iii. 115.
 Manners of the people in the sixteenth century, i. 239 *seq.*
 Marguerite of Navarre, i. 178.
 Marlborough, Duchess of, iii. 362.
 Marlborough, Duke of, iii. 76, 121; iv. 216.
 Marlowe, Christopher, true founder of the dramatic school, i. 284, 285, 332, 381; iii. 423; his dramas, i. 385-397.
 Marston, John, ii. 4.
 Martyr, Peter, ii. 171.
 Martyrs in the reign of Mary, ii. 181-186.
 Marvell, Andrew, iii. 47.
 Masques under James I., i. 238; ii. 42, 43.
 Massillon, ii. 178.
 Massinger, Phillip, i. 381, 382, 405 *seq.*
 Maundeville, Sir John, i. 121, 122, 137.
 May, Thomas, ii. 220.
 Medici, Lorenzo de, i. 246.
 Melancthon, Philip, ii. 157, 171.
 Merlin, i. 100.
 Meung, Jean de, i. 124, 220.
 Michelet, Jules, i. 6, 73; iv. 309.
 Middleton, Thomas, i. 397.
 Mill, John Stuart, iii. 462; iv. 105, 357-426.
 Milton, John, i. 80, 290, 333; ii. 239-256; his prose writings, ii. 257-279; his poetry, 279-318; iii. 179, 180; iv. 234.
 Molière, i. 288; ii. 57, 60, 398 *seq.*; iii. 280; iv. 152.
 Mommsen, Theodor, i. 25.
 Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, iii. 289, 336, 346.
 Montesquieu, Ch., i. 27, 33.
 Moore, Thomas, iii. 310, 427 *seq.*; iv. 51.
 More, Sir Thomas, i. 334, 377.
 Müller, Max, iv. 359.
 Müller, Ottfried, i. 8.
 Murray, John, iii. 431; iv. 51, 54.
 Musset, Alfred de, i. 3, 269, 385; ii. 10, 56; iii. 65, 380, 425, 443; iv. 454 *seq.*; 462, 466.

- NASH, Thomas**, i. 383.
Nayler, James, ii. 209, 214, 220.
Neal's *History of the Puritans*, ii. 214-217, 264.
Newcastle, Duchess of (Margaret Lucas), ii. 398.
Newspaper, first daily, iii. 382.
Newton, Sir Isaac, iii. 95, 115; iv. 399.
Nicole, Peter, iii. 88.
Norman Conquest, the, i. 92-95; its effects on the national language and literature, 116 *seq.*, 164-169; iv. 71, 72.
Normans, the, character of, i. 97; how they became French, 97; their taste and architecture, 98, 99; their literature, chivalry, and success, 99-104; their position and tyranny in England, 115-120; iv. 71, 72.
Nott, Dr. John, i. 258.
Novel, the English—its characteristic, iii. 257 *seq.*; the modern school of novelists, iv. 113 *seq.*
Nut-brown Maid, the,—an ancient ballad, i. 256.

OATES, Titus, iii. 52.
Occam, William, i. 218.
Occleve, Thomas, i. 221.
Ochin, Bernard, ii. 171.
Oliphant, Mrs., iii. 288.
Olivers, Thomas, iii. 98.
Orley, Richard van, i. 230.
Orrery, Earl of, iii. 337.
Otway, Thomas, iii. 28, 38, 41.
Onseley, Sir William, iii. 429.
Overbury, Sir Thomas, i. 335.
Owen, Dr. John, ii. 221.

PAGANISM of poetry and painting in Italy in the sixteenth century, i. 224 *seq.*
Paley, William, iii. 112.
Palgrave, Sir Francis, i. 39.
Parnell, Dr. Thomas, iii. 331.
Pascal, iii. 112, 254, 361; iv. 283.
Pastoral poetry, i. 276.
Peele, George, i. 381.
Penn, William, iii. 95; iv. 272.
Pepys, Samuel, ii. 334, 336, 340, 341.

Percy, Thomas, iii. 423.
Pérelle, i. 4.
Petrarch, i. 171, 250, 251, 256.
Phillips, Ambrose, iii. 331.
Philosophy and history, iv. 285 *seq.*
Philosophy and poetry, connection of i. 213.
Picta, i. 46.
Pickering, Dr. Gilbert, iii. 3.
Piers Plowman's Crede, i. 165.
Piers Ploughman, Vision of, i. 161-165, 250.
Pitt, William, first Earl of Chatham, iii. 77, 125 *seq.*; iv. 238.
Pitt, William (second son of the preceding), iii. 127, 136, 148, 412, 413.
Pleiad, the, i. 24.
Pluche, Abbé, iii. 171.
Poe, Edgar Allen, iii. 261.
Pope, Alexander, iii. 44, 151, 156, 227, 333-364; iv. 15-17, 22, 245 *seq.*
Prayer-book, English, ii. 171-175.
Preaching at the Reformation period, ii. 175, 176.
Presbyterians and Independents in the sixteenth century, ii. 209, 266, 267.
Price, Dr. Richard, iii. 118, 141; iv. 233.
Priestley, Dr., iii. 413.
Prior, Matthew, iii. 331, 364.
Proclus, i. 215.
Prynne, William, ii. 220.
Pulci, an Italian painter, i. 246.
Pultock, Robert, iii. 308.
Purchas, Samuel, i. 334.
Puritans, the, ii. 203 *seq.*, 320 *seq.*
Puttenham, George, i. 250, 334.
Pym, John, iv. 239.

QUARLES, Francis, i. 325; ii. 186.

RABELAIS, i. 202, 300, 361; ii. 67, 338; iii. 238, 308.
Racine, ii. 74; iii. 4, 89; iv. 159, 283.
Raleigh, Sir Walter, i. 289, 334, 372; ii. 187.
Rapin, iii. 4.

- Ray, John, *iii.* 115, 116.
 Reformation in England made way for by the Saxon character and the situation of the Norman Church, *i.* 162-169, 225; *ii.* 148 *seq.*
 Reid, Thomas, *iii.* 118, 141, 310; *iv.* 233, 357.
 Renaissance, the English: manners of the time, *i.* 227-249; the theatre its original product, 359 *seq.*
 Renan, Ernest, *i.* 25, 172.
 Restoration, period of the, in England, *ii.* 319 *seq.*, 430.
 Revolution, period of the, in England, *iii.* 72 *seq.*
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, *ii.* 446; *iii.* 140, 316.
 Richard Cœur de Lion, *i.* 134.
 Richardson, Samuel, *ii.* 325; *iii.* 115, 270-288, 316, 329, 337, 375.
 Ridley, Nicholas, *ii.* 181, 182.
 Ritson, Joseph. *See* Robin Hood.
 Robert of Brunne, *i.* 123, 124.
 Robert of Gloucester, *i.* 123.
 Robertson, Dr. William, *iii.* 310, 330, 379; *iv.* 346.
 Robespierre, *iii.* 89.
 Robin Hood ballads, *i.* 145-149, 240, 250.
 Rochester, Earl of (John Wilmot), *ii.* 337 *seq.*, 394; *iii.* 165, 365; *iv.* 55, 355.
 Rogers, John, martyrdom of, *ii.* 182, 183.
 Rogers, Samuel, *iv.* 16.
 Roland, Song of, *i.* 100, 106 *seq.*
 Rollo, a Norse leader, *i.* 97.
 Ronsard, Peter de, *i.* 24.
 Roscellinus, *i.* 217.
 Roscommon, Earl of, *ii.* 394.
 Roses, wars of the, *i.* 152, 153, 168, 231, 392.
 Rotheland, Hugh de, *i.* 119.
 Rousseau, Jean-Baptiste, *iii.* 356.
 Rousseau, Jean Jacques, *iii.* 321, 348, 373; *iv.* 361.
 Royer-Collard, Pierre-Paul, *iv.* 402.
 Rubens, *i.* 204, 238, 239, 314; *ii.* 1, 67; *iii.* 364.
 Rückert, *iii.* 425.
 Russell, Lord William, *ii.* 334.
 SACREVERELL, Dr., *iii.* 74, 121.
 Sackville, Thomas (Earl of Dorset), *i.* 251.
 Sacy, Lemaistre de, *ii.* 169.
 Sadeler, engravings of, *i.* 265.
 St. Alban's, Abbot of. *See* Lydgate, John.
 St. John. *See* Bolingbroke, Lord.
 St. Theresa, *i.* 218.
 Saint-Simon, Duke of, *i.* 4; *iv.* 6, 158.
 Sainte-Beuve, *i.* 8.
 Saintré, Jehan de, *i.* 136.
 Sand, George. *See* Dudevant, Madame.
 Savage, Richard, *iii.* 351.
 Sawtré, William, *i.* 167.
 Saxons, the, *i.* 37 *seq.*; character of the race, 93; contrast with the Normans, 98; their endurance, 138 *seq.*; their invasion of England, *iv.* 70-72.
 Scaliger, *iv.* 337.
 Schelling, *i.* 29.
 Schiller, *iii.* 388, 425, 443.
 Scotland in the seventeenth century, *ii.* 323, 324.
 Scott, Sir Walter, *i.* 6; *ii.* 355; *iii.* 2 *seq.*, 199 *seq.*, 310, 425; *iv.* 4, 9, 216; his novels and poems, *iii.* 430-442.
 Scotus, Duns, *i.* 215 *seq.*; *iv.* 373.
 Scudéry, Mademoiselle de, *i.* 263.
 Sedley, Sir Charles, *i.* 326; *ii.* 384, 387.
 Selden, John, *i.* 334.
 Seres, William, *ii.* 206.
 Settle, Elkanah, *iii.* 5, 27.
 Sévigné, Madame de, *iii.* 346; *iv.* 283.
 Shadwell, Thomas, *ii.* 357; *iii.* 27, 56.
 Shaftesbury, Anthony Cooper, third Earl of, *iii.* 118.
 Shakespeare, William, *i.* 252, 276, 278, 332; *ii.* 1; *iii.* 12, 23 *seq.*; *iv.* 75; general idea of, *ii.* 45-49; his life and character, 50-67; his style, 67-74; and manners, 74-83; his *dramatis personæ*, 83-90; his men of wit, 90-95; and women, 96-101; his villains, 101-104; the

- principal characters in his plays, 104-123; fancy, imagination,—ideas of existence—love; harmony between the artist and his work, 124-141.
- Sheffield, John. *See* Buckinghamshire, Duke of.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, iii. 425, 454-460; iv. 41.
- Shenstone, William, iii. 377.
- Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, ii. 435 *seq.*; iii. 127, 310; iv. 16.
- Sherlock, Bishop, iii. 99, 113, 271.
- Shirley, James, i. 382; ii. 350.
- Sidney, Algernon, i. 333; ii. 239, 334.
- Sidney, Sir Philip, i. 252, 262-276, 333, 362; ii. 193; iv. 75.
- Skelton, John, i. 224, 250.
- Smart, Christopher, iii. 377.
- Smith, Adam, iii. 118, 141; iv. 233, 271.
- Smith, Sydney, iii. 86, 461.
- Smollett, Tobias, iii. 123, 301-306, 311.
- Society in Great Britain in the present day, iv. 96 *seq.*; in England and in France, 454 *seq.*
- South, Dr. Robert, iii. 99, 104, 108-111.
- Southern, Thomas, iii. 28.
- Southey, Robert, iii. 308, 421, 427; iv. 47, 255.
- Speed, John, i. 334.
- Spelman, Sir Henry, i. 334.
- Spencer, Herbert, iv. 75, 114.
- Spenser, Edmund, i. 252, 276, 288, 333; ii. 239, 294; his life, character, and poetry, i. 289-321; iii. 22; iv. 75, 430, 447.
- Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn, iii. 462; iv. 321.
- Steele, Sir Richard, iii. 127, 151; iv. 216.
- Stendhal, Count de, i. 33, 97, 191.
- Sterling, John, iv. 287 *seq.*
- Sterne, Laurence, iii. 306-311, 375.
- Stewart, Dugald, iii. 141, 310, 406.
- Stillington, Bishop, iii. 99, 112, 113.
- Stowe, John, i. 334.
- Strafford, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of, iv. 239 *seq.*
- Strafford, William, i. 232.
- Styrie, John, i. 364.
- Stubbes, John, i. 235, 241, 242.
- Suckling, Sir John, i. 323, 325; ii. 390.
- Sue, Eugène, iv. 161.
- Surrey, Henry Howard, Earl of, i. 251-259; ii. 160.
- Swift, Jonathan, ii. 325; iii. 4, 115, 116, 127, 150 *seq.*; iv. 216, 257; sketch of his life, iii. 198-210; his wit, 210-214; his pamphlets, 214-226; his poetry, 226-238; his philosophy, etc., 238-256.
- TAILLEFER, i. 103, 113.
- Tasso, i. 300, 311.
- Taylor, Jeremy, i. 334; ii. 189, 193-202.
- Temple, Sir William, ii. 378; iii. 205, 239, 330; iv. 234.
- Teniers, David, iii. 438.
- Tennyson, Alfred, iii. 462; iv. 114, 427-466.
- Thackeray, William M., iii. 441, 461; his novels, iv. 165-226.
- Theatre, the, in the sixteenth century, i. 360; after the Restoration, ii. 350, 351, 399 *seq.*; iii. 6 *seq.*
- Thibaut of Champagne, i. 111.
- Thierry, Augustin, i. 6, 42, 72, 116, 117; iv. 282.
- Thiers, Louis Adolphe, iv. 248, 282.
- Thomson, James, iii. 371-374.
- Thorpe, John, i. 52, 53, 60, 71.
- Tickell, Thomas, iii. 331.
- Tillotson, Archbishop, iii. 99 *seq.*
- Tindal, Matthew, iii. 115.
- Titian, i. 319; ii. 67.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de, i. 25.
- Toland, John, iii. 115.
- Toleration Act, the, iv. 272, 273.
- Tomkins, Thomas, ii. 184.
- Townley, James, ii. 446.
- Turner, Sharon, i. 61, 69 *seq.*
- Tutchin, John, iii. 351.
- Tyndale, William, ii. 166 *seq.*, 177-206.
- URRÉ, Honoré d', i. 363, 430.
- Usher, James, i. 334.

- VANNEBUSH, Sir John**, ii. 396-432.
Vane, Sir Harry, ii. 336.
Vega, Lope de, i. 218, 380; ii. 1, 354.
Village feasts of sixteenth century described, i. 240-242.
Villehardouin, a French chronicler, i. 110, 137.
Villiers, George. *See* Buckingham.
Vinci, Leonardo da, i. 22.
Voltaire, i. 21, 22; iii. 321, 356; iv. 50, 337.
Vos, Martin de, i. 265.

WACK, Robert, i. 100, 103 *seq.*, 118.
Waldenses, the, i. 217.
Waller, Edmund, i. 326; ii. 239, 350, 389-395; iii. 330.
Walpole, Horace, iii. 347.
Walpole, Sir Robert, iii. 74, 82.
Walton, Isaac, i. 285, 334.
Warburton, Bishop, iii. 115.
Warner, William, i. 286.
Warton, Thomas, i. 94, 117-119, 126, 127, 219; iii. 423.
Watt, James, iii. 141.
Watteau, Anthony, iii. 346.
Watts, Isaac, iii. 377.
Webster, John, i. 397, 406 *seq.*; ii. 1; iii. 33.

Wells, Dr. William Charles, iv. 390.
Wesley, John, iii. 95-99.
Wetherell, Elizabeth, iv. 109.
Wharton, Lord, iii. 362.
Whitefield, George, iii. 95-98.
Wiclif, John, i. 166, 391; ii. 159, 166.
Wilkes, John, iii. 126.
William III., ii. 379; iv. 73.
William of Malmesbury, i. 100.
William the Conqueror, i. 102 *seq.*
Windham, William, iii. 127.
Witenagemote, the, i. 58.
Wither, George, ii. 189.
Wollaston, William Hyde, iv. 233.
Wolsey, Cardinal, i. 224; ii. 161.
Wollstonecraft, Mary (Mrs. Godwin), i. 3.
Wordsworth, William, iii. 423, 444-454.
Wortley, Lady Mary. *See* Montagu, Lady Mary.
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, i. 250, 251.
Wycherley, William, i. 24; ii. 357-371, 385, 398, 399, 419; iii. 41, 165.

YONGE, Charlotte Mary, iv. 109.
Young, Arthur, iii. 141.
Young, Edward, iii. 377.

THE END.

